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Interorganizational Collaboration in Education for Community Change: An Exploratory Case Study

Stacy Marie Mehlberg
Seattle Pacific University

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By

STACY MARIE MEHLBERG

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Approved by _____
(John Bond, Ed.D., Chairperson of the Dissertation Committee)

_____
(Nyaradzo Mvududu, Ed.D.)

_____
(Julie Antilla, Ph.D.)

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(Nyaradzo Mvududu, Ed.D., Dean, School of Education)

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to the loves of my life; Darrah, Aidan, Sam, and Rich. Your smiles, laughter, and patience have given me the endurance to persist over these past five years. I hope you will always follow your dreams, and know you are capable of anything. And to my mother, who left this earth far too early; I did it! Thanks for always believing in me.

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Abstract

In the fields of business and healthcare, researchers have found that organizations are more successful at serving their clients when they collaboratively share knowledge, resources, and time using a multidisciplinary approach. There is less empirical evidence supporting these interorganizational collaborations (IOCs) in education. In 2013, the Cold Spring School District (CSSD) established an initiative to improve student and community outcomes. To do this, the district created an IOC to guide their work. The purpose of this current study was the exploration of this IOC to better understand how the IOC was developed, supported, and sustained. Through analysis of interviews, surveys, and document review, qualitative coding revealed that in order to create a sustainable IOC in education, organizations must have distributed, humble leadership, a rigorous evaluation and research process, prioritization of initiative components, and the strategic selection of individuals to guide the work and maintain a focus on a set of common, mutually agreed upon goals. Additionally, the researcher found that the relationship between education and community was a critical variable in the success of the IOC.

Keywords: Collaboration, interorganizational collaboration (IOC), promise programs, postsecondary success, community

Chapter One

The term collaboration is used often in contemporary discussions of education. Although defined in many ways, one commonality in definitions is the notion that collaboration involves a group working together towards a common goal or purpose (Gajda & Koliba, 2007; Slavin, 2014). Intriligator (1983) suggested that the terms *collaboration* and *cooperation* could be used interchangeably when multiple groups or organizations work together, sharing resources and energy to address common goals. Much of the research on collaborative or cooperative learning in academic settings is focused on student, teacher, and administrative level interaction (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2007; Slavin, 2014; Sweet & Michaelsen, 2007). Johnson and Johnson (1989) conducted over 300 studies on cooperation in educational settings, from K-12 to postsecondary, and noted that the construct is more complex than simply working together. One major component of collaboration is interdependence, or the idea that group members rely on one another to work towards group and individual success (Lewin, 1947). In order to develop interdependence and create change, group members must be able to form relationships and build trust (Sweet & Michaelsen, 2007; Zhong, Peng, & Yang, 2017).

It is not uncommon to hear educational leaders discuss the need for students to work together to solve problems, explore their creativity, and share knowledge. Brain research supports the notion that students learn better by talking and sharing their thinking (National Research Council, 2000; Sousa, 2016). There are expressions such as "Two heads are better than one" and "Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much". In business, organizations collaborate to innovate for their clients, with

significant research in business literature supporting the value of these collaborative efforts (Palinkas, Fuentes, Finno, Garcia, Holloway, & Chamberlain, 2014). Studies have shown that people and organizations working together towards a common goal provide desirable outcomes in efficient and effective ways (Foster-Fishman, Salem, Allen, & Fahrbach, 2001; Legler & Reischl, 2003; Sharma & Kearins, 2011).

In the field of human services, organizations have been successful at serving their clients when they collaboratively share knowledge, resources, and time (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001). Similarly, in health care, service providers develop partnerships to find the most productive and affordable ways to serve their patients (Casey, 2008). These collaborations are often complex and challenging (Cooper & Shumate, 2012). They rely on a sophisticated structure of group dynamics, leadership, and a willingness to approach change as necessary for growth and progress (Sharma & Kearins, 2011). School systems incorporate collaboration internally through professional learning communities, building leadership teams, and group tasks for students (Gajda & Koliba, 2007). There is less empirical evidence, however, that highlights collaboration between school districts and outside organizations for a common, mutually beneficial goal (Vargas & Venezia, 2015).

There is growing evidence in education that the population being served is becoming more diverse, requiring a substantially more layered and nuanced set of skills to prepare students for a productive future (Nieto, 2000; United States Census Bureau, 2018). It is no longer enough to graduate from high school, and school systems alone may not have the tools required to meet the needs of the changing student population (Deil-Amen, 2011; Entwisle, 2018). Schools are tasked with providing social, emotional, and career support in addition to building a strong academic foundation. Additionally,

school districts are often seen as the nerve center of communities, offering a place for people to interact and discuss concerns, issues, and hopes for their children, themselves, and the future of their community. The education of a community has significant implications for the long term social and economic progress of community members (Siegel, 2008; Vranek et al., 2017).

Currently, there are social and economic concerns regarding post-secondary success for students throughout the United States (Dagar, 2012; Kena et al., 2016). In a 2017 report from the National Center for Education Statistics, data analysts found that the percent of students graduating with a certificate or associate's degree within 150 percent of normal time was 28% for students in the 2011 high school graduation cohort. Rates for undergraduates seeking 4 year degrees were slightly higher, with 39.8% of the 2008 cohort completing their degree (NCES, 2017). In a summary paper from the White House Summit on Community Colleges (House, 2011), Dr. Jill Biden spoke to educators and policy makers about the critical role of community colleges in the effort to prepare graduates to be leaders and members of a new, more modern and diverse 21st Century workforce (House, 2011). Dr. Biden discussed community college in a historical context, as an equity issue, and as a major force in the future of our country's economic and educational productivity. Repeating remarks from an earlier presentation, she stated,

> For more and more people, community colleges are the way to the future. They're giving real hope to families who thought the American Dream was slipping away. They are equipping Americans with the skills and expertise that are relevant to the emerging jobs of the future. (Biden presentation remarks, as cited in House, 2011, p. 3)

There is a clear, strong, economic argument for the creation of a comprehensive system of education that extends past high school. If one purpose of education is to provide a service to students and communities, then the idea of an interorganizational collaboration (IOC) to meet the multidimensional and changing needs of the clients is one that has merit and warrants further exploration.

Purpose of the Study

In 2013, the Cold Spring School District (CSSD) established a vision to improve student achievement, modernize instructional practices, and prepare students for college and careers. This vision developed out of the changing social and economic needs of the community and was embraced by the school board and The Cold Spring Foundation, a community organization deeply committed to helping the community achieve success. Together, these partners reached out to an educational consultant, The DSA Group, and the local community college, Arlington College, to develop a collaborative system with a focus on student postsecondary success. As the Director of Research and Evaluation for The DSA Group, I was assigned to this project in 2015 as the primary researcher. My role included participating in the collaboration meetings, collecting data, conducting interviews and research reviews, and providing evaluation reports throughout the initiative.

As part of this initiative, the district and its partners set a goal for 60% of high school graduates to receive a meaningful postsecondary degree or certificate by 2024. *Postsecondary* degrees and certificates include 2-year college completion, 4-year college completion, certificate programs, and apprenticeship programs (Balfanz, DePaoli, Ingram, Bridgeland, & Fox, 2016). This goal for persistence to postsecondary success

aligned with the strategic goals of The Washington Roundtable, who set a similar goal of 70% postsecondary success by 2030 (Vranek et al., 2017). The Washington Roundtable, a nonprofit organization led by executive leaders in the private sector, shared this mission statement on their website, "Our members work together to effect positive change on public policy issues that they believe are most important to supporting state economic vitality and fostering opportunity for all Washingtonians" (www.waroundtable.com). In collaboration with local organizations, the Washington Roundtable published a report titled *Creating Great Schools for Washington Students* (Vranek et al., 2017). Driven by data, the report highlighted the need for schools to support students in acquiring postsecondary credentials to fill the estimated 740,000 job openings in Washington State over the next 5 years. In context, the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC), in a 2014 report on postsecondary outcomes for Washington State students, found that only 31% of Washington students go on to earn postsecondary degrees (ERDC, 2014).

At the time the CSSD collaborative initiative was conceived, student persistence to meaningful degree or certification in the community was low. Researchers from The DSA Group, a research and consulting company based in Seattle, Washington, obtained college enrollment and persistence data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) for Eagle's Nest High School, the only comprehensive high school in the CSSD. Data was gathered for the graduating classes of 2004 through 2010. Researchers submitted lists of the names, birth dates, and year of graduation to the NSC to be matched with the college reported enrollments from the same time period. Data was analyzed to determine persistence rates for W.F. West High School graduates from these years. Displayed in

Table 1 are the percentages of CSSD high school students completing a 2-year or 4-year college program.

Table 1

Percent of College Going Students

Graduating Class	% Receiving a Two – Year Degree	% Receiving a Four – Year Degree
2004	29.4%	24.9%
2005	16.1%	23.3%
2006	26.2%	19.8%
2007	21.0%	19.5%
2008	15.4%	9.6%
2009	20.3%	
2010	12.2%	

The DSA Group began their research partnership with the CSSD in 2013. Initially, researchers from The DSA Group were asked to conduct a needs assessment for the district, provide research on national best practices, and generate a report on College Promise programs to provide recommendations on how the CSSD could leverage the momentum and financial support they were about to receive from the Cold Spring Foundation. The goal was to expand their reach and support more students in persisting to postsecondary success. During this time, DSA researchers began traveling to the school district, meeting with teachers, administrators, and organizational leaders. These visits included observations of instruction, participation in meetings and professional development, and work with the high school counselors to develop a mentor program for seniors preparing for graduation.

Senior level researchers from The DSA Group were asked to join the Cold Spring Steering Committee, a group of organizational, community, and district leaders who met regularly to discuss progress on their goals, plan for future opportunities, and address

challenges and concerns. It was during these meetings that the unique efforts of this school district became apparent. There were adults from several different areas of expertise: teachers, principals, high level district leaders, community college executives, business leaders, and philanthropists, meeting to talk about student success *past* high school, as well as the impact of student outcomes on the local community. This committee was looking at improving students' long-term outcomes for success instead of focusing on short term assessment scores.

Several local and national studies have focused on the economic impact of higher education (Carnevale, Strohl, & Smith, 2013; Deming, Yuchtman, Abulafi, Goldin, & Katz, 2016; Matthews, 2012). In a 2012 report from the Lumina Foundation, the author proposed that there was a need to increase postsecondary degree and certificate attainment based on the shortage of qualified candidates to fill current job openings (Matthews, 2012). He noted, "the essential skills for success in today's economy are critical thinking skills – abstract reasoning, problem solving, communication, and teamwork. These are precisely the skills that are needed to build strong communities and societies wherever one lives" (p. 4).

In a similar report, *A Projection of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018*, researchers from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce shared that, as a nation, "our ability to match education alternatives with career options is woefully underdeveloped" (Carnevale, Strohl, & Smith, 2013, p. 1). Postsecondary education results in higher wages, and a larger accumulated wealth over a lifetime. In their 2010 report, Carnevale et al. (2013) projected opportunities for job openings through 2018 for different levels of postsecondary education. Carnevale and

colleagues found that 26% of the job openings for engineers and technicians, 25% for healthcare practitioners and technical occupations, 21% for healthcare support occupations, and 21% for installation, maintenance and repair occupations could be filled with holders of Associate degrees nationwide. They also predicted that by 2018, the economy would create 46.8 million job openings, with nearly 2/3 requiring at least some college education. Of these jobs, about 30% will require a two-year Associate degree and 33% will require a bachelor's degree or higher (Carnevale et al., 2013).

To achieve the ambitious outcomes that the CSSD set forth, district and community leaders hypothesized that by collaborating to pool resources and knowledge they could align policies, programs, and initiatives that would advance both college readiness and college completion. The purpose of this current study is the exploration of this IOC in the field of education to reach a common goal of student postsecondary completion and success and improve opportunities throughout the community.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were designed to explore the processes and relationship components necessary to build an IOC with a school district and non-district partners. The questions were guided by Kurt Lewin's theoretical work on group dynamics and change theory, and the review of relevant literature.

Research Question 1: How was this IOC developed, nurtured, and maintained?

Research Question 2: What does this IOC mean to the stakeholders involved?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout the study: collaboration, interorganizational collaboration, Promise Programs, and postsecondary success. The terms are defined below.

Collaboration: Although defined in many ways, for this study collaboration was used to describe the interactive, mutually engaged relationship between all of the organizational leaders working on the CSSD Initiative.

Interorganizational Collaboration (IOC): This term was used throughout the study to describe the reciprocal relationship that developed between the organizations involved in the CSSD Initiative. The school district, The Cold Spring Foundation, Arlington College, and The DSA Group were the foundational organizations making up this IOC, with additional organizations participating at times throughout the process.

Promise Programs: The idea of providing comprehensive services, and improving K-12 systems of education for all students throughout their life-span, is well supported through empirical evidence. As the economic need for more college ready students has increased over the last decade, so have programs designed to help students afford college. Many such programs are called “promise” programs, and include efforts to provide social, emotional, and fiscal support for students as they focus on the goal of career and college readiness.

Postsecondary Success: The term postsecondary success was used throughout this study and referred to student outcomes related to success after high school. The CSSD determined that for their community and demographic, postsecondary success

would include graduation from a 4-year college, 2-year college, or the attainment of professional certificates or licensure in a living-wage earning career.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The review of literature for this study included an exploration of theoretical perspectives on group dynamics, leadership, and change management. Additionally, contemporary research on IOC in business, healthcare, and education were included and synthesized to provide support for the project rationale, results, and discussion. Research on college and career readiness was included to provide context and understanding regarding the common goals and focus areas that were central to this case study.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was based on Kurt Lewin's work in the field of social science. Lewin's Theory of Change model, developed in the 1940s, stemmed from his research on group dynamics, action research, leadership, and field theory (Grove, 1992; Lewin, 1946). "Lewin saw the four concepts as forming an integrated approach to analyzing, understanding and bringing about change at the group, organizational and societal levels" (Burns, 2007, p. 985). As a social scientist, Lewin was interested in understanding and ameliorating social conflict, particularly in minority groups (Burns, 2004; Cummings & Huse, 1989). By conducting studies on social behaviors in the field, Lewin was able to observe and track the patterns of interactions between group members in real time. Lewin (1948) asserted that "it is not similarity or dissimilarity of members that constitute a group but interdependence of fate" (p. 165).

Group Dynamics Theory

Group dynamics has been defined as an empirically researched field of inquiry dedicated to understanding the nature and development of groups, the relationships

between group members and separate groups, and the impact of groups on society (Cartwright & Zander, 1968). Kurt Lewin is often credited with introducing the term *group dynamics* in 1939, as a component of his field theory (Kristonis, 2005). Lewin proposed that the group itself becomes an entity outside of the individual participants, and that members of the group must become interdependent on one another to truly function as a group (Brown, 1988; Lewin, 1948). This interdependence of group members distinguishes collaboration from similar terms often used, including *partnership* and *alliance* (Legler & Reischl, 2003).

Cartwright and Zander (1968) noted the difficulty in clarifying many of the ambiguous aspects of group dynamics due to the complexities and varying theoretical dimensions that have been studied and proposed. In a literature review of group dynamics across disciplines, Kivlighan and Miles (2007) found that the study of group dynamics appeared in over 1000 journals during the 16 years from 1987 to 2002. The results from Kivlighan and Miles (2007) Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA), "an automated, statistical method for extracting the knowledge structures and contextual meanings present in a sample of text" (p. 131), followed by a cluster analysis of 97 article abstracts revealed a number of prevalent content themes, including the power of relationships, group cohesion, and leadership. The authors acknowledged that by choosing LSA for their methodology they were limited to using only content available in the abstracts of articles, however, these content themes were consistent, and the researchers felt they accurately represented the underlying research. For the purpose of understanding the relationship between group dynamics, IOCs, and leadership, a summary of these relevant topics is included in this paper.

Several factors influence relationship building and communication within groups. Examples include a member's perceptions of his/her status in the group relative to his/her peers, feelings of acceptance within the group, and the level of safety and trust achieved between group members (Cartwright & Zander, 1968). Erez et al. (2009) identified the interaction between acceptance and anxiety to be an indicator of commitment to the group, with significant findings from 198 students completing a self-questionnaire regarding group commitment. The authors suggested that feedback between group members is critical to group acceptance and, in turn, trust. Trust between group or organization members must be established as a foundation for the interdependence and group cohesion needed to be collaborative (Bachman & Zaheer, 2008; Lewin, 1944).

Cartwright and Zander (1968) defined group cohesion as the degree to which group members want to stay in a specific group. When cohesion is high, group members are motivated to contribute to the group's success, more likely to care about the welfare of the group, and willing to participate at a more engaged level. When concerns about loyalty, disproportion of power, distrust, or inconsistency of membership plague the group, cohesion levels are low, and groups are less productive.

Similarly, Erez, Sleebos, Mikulincer, Van Ijzendoorn, Ellemers, and Kroonenberg (2009) addressed the importance of the relationship between commitment to the group and feelings of respect and belonging. Yallom (1995) suggested that acceptance, approval, and membership were critical components that facilitate individual development within the group. Additionally, group cohesion impacts learning, as members acquire new knowledge through shared experiences, but only if group members feel safe to engage (Cockrell, Caplow, & Donaldson, 2000). Group leadership plays a

significant role in facilitating group cohesion and promoting interdependence, processes needed to build group trust (Lewin, 1948; Shimazoe & Aldrich, 2010).

Leadership

The relationship between group cohesion and group leadership has been researched from many theoretical and contextual perspectives (Lewin, 1947; Sanders, 2014; Thomas, Martin, & Riggio, 2013). In a quantitative study designed to explore the effects of leader behavior on group processes, Shechtman and Toren (2009) found that group leader behaviors significantly impacted group cohesion. Likert-scale instruments designed to measure self-esteem, risk-taking, bonding, resistance, and self-disclosure between group members were administered to 205 graduate-level counseling students. Using a model of group leader behavior suggested by Lieberman and Golant (2002) as the theoretical framework, Shechtman and Toren (2009) found that the leader's ability to provide feedback, offer support, and form bonds with group members had a positive effect on student learning outcomes. Both the personality of the leader and the interventions incorporated by the leader could impact a group's ability to form cohesion.

Cartwright and Zander (1968) explored the influences of the leader on group dynamics and performance. In summarizing research on effective leadership they found that possessing a supportive demeanor and adapting to fit the needs of the group were important characteristics. Thomas et al. (2013) suggested that recent research on group dynamics promoted the idea of leadership as part of the group process, moving away from the ideas of leader-centered approaches that have dominated social science research. Strong group leaders can facilitate relationship building while embedding themselves into the group culture and participating in communication and feedback opportunities.

Building relationships, developing cohesion, and demonstrating strong leadership are components of group dynamics that strongly influence the success of collaborations (Kirtman & Fullen, 2016). Exploring the relationship between group dynamics and IOC is critical to understanding how different organizations work together to make change and accomplish a common goal (Austin, 2000).

Lewin's Theory of Change

Based on evidence collected from several studies on organizational behavior (Burns, 2004; Lewin, 1944; Lewin, 1946), Lewin developed a three-step model for change to address what he perceived as pervasive issues impacting organizations, including resistance to change and leadership. Lewin proposed that "A fundamental principle of effective change management is that people support what they help to create" (1946[KN1]).

Lewin named Step 1 of his change model *Unfreezing*. He believed that in order to implement change there needed to be an upset in the balance of the groups' beliefs and actions (Lewin, 1958). Lewin proposed that disequilibrium was the first step to changing behaviors and attitudes. As a result, he acknowledged that change was often a challenging process.

Step 2, *Moving*, was characterized by a belief that to induce change you would need movement. This movement would need to include processes of action designed to motivate group participation towards a more acceptable place of existence. Lewin (1947) noted that for this change to be sustained, some form of reward would become necessary following movement.

Finally, Lewin (1947) called Step 3 *Refreezing*. Lewin suggested that once behaviors and attitudes of group members had shifted, there would need to be a solidification of these new behaviors to maintain the change. Lewin's beliefs about group dynamics contributed to this third step in his theoretical model of change (Burns, 2004). He proposed that in order for the change to have a sustained impact, group members need to believe that the change was congruent with their beliefs. Refreezing often requires changes to the culture, norms, policies and practices of organizations, not just individuals (Cummings & Huse, 1989).

Relevant Research

Interorganizational Collaboration

There are many definitions of collaboration in organizational and educational literature. For this study, collaboration was defined as, "a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible" (Gray, 1989, p. 5). Additionally, Gajda & Koliba (2007) defined collaboration as the interaction of people, or groups, for a shared purpose that would not be accomplished in isolation. Austin (2000) defined organizations that come together as strategic alliances, and additional studies refer to these efforts as alignments (Zaff et al., 2015), partnerships (Intriligator, 1992), and alliances (Casey, 2008). These definitions contribute to the understanding of IOC, which researchers in business have identified as critical as it allows for "the pooling of resources that individual agencies may require for successful implementation…" (Palinkas et al., 2014, p. 83)

In their research on IOC in the human service industry, Foster-Fishman et al. (2001) conducted a mixed-methods study to determine the effectiveness of interorganizational alliances in a rural community. They proposed that membership on coordinating councils or service delivery teams would be related to the output and support the interorganizational alliance could provide to clients in need. The authors explored patterns of interactions between representatives from organizations within the alliance. They defined these interactions as "exchanges", which included the sharing of information, funding, and innovations.

Foster-Fishman et al. (2001) used a social network analytic tool, *Kliquefinder* (Frank, 1996), to explore interactions between participants from 32 organizations in the alliance. The authors administered surveys to service providers and organizational leaders, yielding a response rate of 62% for providers, and 87% for organizational leaders. Additionally, the researchers conducted qualitative observations of the coordinating council exchanges and interagency team meetings to triangulate their quantitative findings.

Foster-Fishman and colleagues found that the structure of the coordinated council meetings was important in fostering IOC among different stakeholder groups. Specifically, the authors identified several processes, including the inclusion of an agenda, shared work opportunities within each meeting to plan collaborative initiatives, a focus on shared outcomes and member accountability, and transparency regarding funding and barriers to success that encouraged open dialogue and trust building between members. The authors also noted that, "the inclusion of a broad spectrum of employees in coordinating councils is an important part of a community's efforts to increase IOC" (p.

901). Foster-Fishman et al. (2001) concluded that the findings of their study should be interpreted with caution, however, as many of the participants had self-selected into the study based on their existing participation in interorganizational alliances within the community. Additionally, the complexity of services and organizations represented in the study made results from the network analytic tool more difficult to interpret.

In their research on IOC to support regional sustainability, Sharma and Kearins (2011) explored the challenges in creating an IOC in the presence of competing agendas and outcomes. The authors' research questions focused on how institutional objectives influence the collaborative relationship, and how organizations working towards a common goal can build a model of collaboration that works despite the barriers. Through qualitative data collection and analysis, the researchers conducted line-by-line coding of six 2-hour meetings, and reviewed field notes and organizational documents collected over a two-year period. Items were re-coded by the second author, discussed collaboratively, and shared with the collaboration facilitator to review for accuracy and validation.

Casey (2008) proposed that IOCs benefit from shared goals, a willingness to negotiate and work towards a common purpose, and the ability to divide the decision-making responsibilities across the organizations involved. In her paper on success factors of interorganizational relationships, Casey (2008) identified several features of successful collaborations, including building trust, implementing leadership to manage change, developing a strong framework for the collaboration, balancing the power while creating equity among the partners, and successfully communicating to develop mutual understanding and build consensus. Casey (2008) acknowledged the limitations of her

study, noting that there was insignificant empirical evidence in the nursing field to substantiate many of the claims made, and that her recommendations were based on an empirical literature review of existing studies, not her own research on the topic. She concluded, however, that the need for more research on these collaborations was necessary to meet the changing needs of the nursing community.

Sharma and Kearins (2011) identified several challenges to maintaining an IOC, including navigating organizational differences, understanding interorganizational politics, and the realizing the need to compromise. In their qualitative case study of organizational member behaviors, Sharma and Kearins conducted line-by-line coding of interview transcripts and meeting notes to determine themes related to collaboration. Over a 1 year period the authors collected data by observing 6 organizational meetings for a total of 12 hours.

Sharma and Kearins (2011) found that there was a power differential between members which caused tension in building relationships, and several people perceived bias, resistance, or lack of genuine engagement in relationships to be additional barriers. The researchers also found that members of the collaboration had different skill levels related to the ability to collaborate, which contributed to challenges towards progress on outcomes. Overall, Sharma and Kearins noted that the IOC was successful in process, as all participants remained engaged despite inherent challenges throughout. They concluded that although there were benefits to organizations collaborating towards a common goal, the relationship aspect was complex and nuanced. Sharma and Kearins (2011) also noted that their data was only representative of 1 year of the IOC, which may

not have been adequate to draw significant or generalizable conclusions as this did not provide enough time to track changes and measure potential outcomes.

In a more recent exploration on implementation of best-practices for abused and neglected youth, Palinkas et al. (2014) conducted interviews with 38 leaders from probation, mental health and child welfare partner organizations engaging in an inter-organizational collaboration to improve outcomes across targeted counties in California. As part of a randomized control study, researchers collected and coded qualitative data using a "Coding Consensus, Co-occurrence, and Comparison method" (Willms et al., 1990).

Participants were purposefully selected, with an equal distribution from all partner organizations. Palinkas et al. (2014) identified three characteristics of collaboration that impacted the success of the IOC, including the process of collaboration, the context of the partnership, and the characteristics of the people and organizations participating in the collaboration. Additionally, they found that IOCs thrived when partners developed a common language and recognition of the problem, made a sustained commitment to the work, developed equitable accountability, had supportive leadership, and demonstrated personal qualities including honestly, credibility, trust and respect.

In a mixed methods study on IOC between Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) in Zambia, Cooper and Shumate (2012) proposed a "bona fide network perspective" (p. 623) for collaboration, which highlights the dynamic nature of interorganizational relationships, the "fuzzy" boundaries, and the critical interaction between the organizations and the environment surrounding the collaboration. The authors suggested that in addition to sharing similar characteristics with more traditional

models of IOC, the bona fide perspective is focused on multiple level outcomes for the collaboration and for the individual partners, and considers the contextual influences surrounding the partnership. These collaborations often begin with a meta-problem, defined as a multifaceted problem that cannot be addressed by any single organization (Henri, Mohan, & Yanacopulos, 2004).

Cooper and Shumate (2012) conducted quantitative and qualitative data collection and analyses, including interviews, surveys, and social-network data. The authors blended valid and reliable instruments, including part of the collaboration barriers instrument (Lewis, Scott, D'Urso, & Davis, 2008) with researcher generated questions and open-ended survey items. All data were coded and themed using Atlas.ti, a software program designed to conduct integrative, mixed methods analysis (Cooper & Shumate, 2012). Results from data analysis showed that for these participants, there were struggles to meet the collaborative outcomes and remain engaged in the partnership, largely due to organizational capacity, issues with communication and organization, and leadership. Organization members that felt they were already at capacity reported that a lack of significant infrastructure was a barrier to collaboration, while organizations not at capacity reported they did not feel a need to collaborate and did not want to lose their independence. Additional themes included concerns about money, about who would receive credit for the outcomes, and about who should document the IOC's work. Cooper and Shumate (2012) found qualitative evidence to support the notion that the IOC "boosted their systemic capacity" (p.646). Cooper and Shumate noted, however, that for this particular study, the barriers significantly impacted overall goal attainment.

Additionally, the researchers acknowledged the lack of generalizability of their study, and noted that unique cultural aspects played a significant role in their findings.

Braganza (2016) conducted a qualitative research study focused on the challenges impacting the success of IOC in the field of human services. The author conducted qualitative interviews with 19 Canadian directors of social service organizations to uncover the barriers to IOC. Braganza selected participants with varied perspectives and areas of expertise to strengthen the study and add richness to the narrative. The author found that in addition to communication, trust, equal participation, and balance of power, IOCs required people with the relational skills to manage the process of collaboration. Additionally, Braganza (2016) proposed that a lack of time investment, diverse beliefs about the purpose and goals of the collaboration, and unsubstantial personal relationships were challenges to these interorganizational partnerships.

Braganza (2016) noted that this study focused on the challenges of building the relationships needed for the collaboration, rather than on the processes necessary for the collaboration to be successful. Using open coding, and subsequent theming, five common themes emerged, including managing conflict, dedicating time, managing competition, overcoming biases, and establishing roles, responsibilities, and goals. Qualitative perspectives from interviewees highlighted the need to invest energy, create intentionality, and "dedicate time to building values such as trust, respect, and honesty through authentic, difficult conversations during regular face-to-face meetings" (Braganza, 2016, p. 9). Additionally, Braganza suggested that contextual factors within and between collaborating organizations should be considered. Transitions in staff, priority or funding changes, and shifting focus on desired outcomes can impact

collaborative relationships (Braganza, 2016; Lewis, Ishbell, & Koschmann, 2010; Perrault, McClelland, Austin, & Sieppert, 2011).

In the field of education, there is empirical research on collaboration between colleges and the private sector (Siegel, 2008), partnerships between universities and school districts (Paletta, Candal, &Vidoni, 2009), and collaboration between school districts and community organizations (Tilhou, Rose, Eckhoff, & Glasgow, 2018). Siegel (2008) studied an interorganizational model of collaboration designed to support underrepresented students through the LEAD (Leadership Education and Development) program. Founded in 1979 by executives from Johnson & Johnson, the LEAD program was a response to the perceived lack of minority representation in business. Through sustained partnerships between Universities and businesses, students were offered financial, educational, and social supports to prepare them for the workforce. The structure of the IOC was supported through work at the college and business level, with representatives from all partnering organizations. Siegel's (2008) question was, "How do social institutions collectively organize to prepare underrepresented students for access to-and success in- postsecondary education and beyond" (p. 197).

In his definition of IOC, Siegel (2008) proposed that the structure of collaborative relationships requires voluntary participation from stakeholders, is self-regulating, and includes a focus on a common objective that goes beyond the interests of any one individual partner (Chisholm, 1998). Through qualitative data collection, coding and analysis over a 15-month period, Siegel conducted 77 interviews with representation from 12 Universities, 20 corporate firms, 2 federal agencies, and LEAD National. Siegel found that across all sites, most of the partners interviewed reported that they engaged in

LEAD out of self-interest. These collaborations allowed organizations to capitalize on the strengths of their partners and serve students in a more comprehensive, holistic manner that each organization could not achieve on its own (Siegel, 2008). Siegel concluded that, "the collaboration between academe, the private sector, government, and the nonprofit sector provides a potentially powerful arrangement for accomplishing educational aims…" (p. 205). Additionally, Siegel suggested that IOCs could be a viable response to meeting the complex needs facing education.

In a 2009 article on a university-school district partnership in Boston, MA, Paletta, Candal, and Vidoni discussed the strengths, challenges, and issues of sustainability facing this 20-year collaboration, unique in that Boston University played a consistent and authoritative role in the day-to-day operations of the public-school district. The school of education at Boston University undertook this comprehensive initiative after considerable economic and social stress on the community of Chelsea began to impact the quality of K-12 opportunities. Their primary goal was to reform the school district and help key district stakeholders learn how to sustain the work and become autonomous at the completion of the collaboration.

Paletta et al. (2009) found that political and operational management were critical components of the IOC. The authors noted that while the collaboration impacted student achievement and community engagement, the process of collaboration may have been more influential, and at times, more challenging to navigate. Organizational leaders demonstrated flexibility and adaptability throughout the partnership, which helped program constituents to feel valued, build trust, and develop a sense of responsibility and

ownership over the work. Leaders also learned to balance top-down leadership with leadership built from internal capacity within the partner organizations.

Although Paletta et al.'s 2009 study added a compelling qualitative narrative to the narrow base of empirical evidence for IOC in education, there was a lack of supported research, structured methodology, or acknowledgement of the limitations of the study. The authors noted the unique situation of this collaboration and proposed that more research was needed to better understand the components required to sustain collaborations in the field of education.

Several additional studies in the field of education have addressed the need to support whole child development into and through public education (Amey, Eddy, & Ozaki, 2007; Swanson et al., 2016; Vandal, 2013). These initiatives are often called Promise Programs, and address social, emotional, and academic learning from birth through post-secondary achievement (Miller-Adams & Fiore, 2013). Almost all of these programs included some component of interorganizational partnership, cooperation, or collaboration.

K-20 Education

The proposition of creating a seamless system of education to support students from kindergarten through post-secondary degree or certification attainment has been part of educational discourse for several years (Collins, 2014; Gomez, 2001; Vargas & Venezia, 2015). Vargas and Venezia (2015), in a working paper focused on creating high school and college partnerships, suggested that "strong, sustained collaboration between secondary and postsecondary systems is essential in order to prepare more young people to complete college and earn credentials that lead to careers" (p. 1). Vargas and Venezia

noted that although there has not been a comprehensive effort to create these collaborations to date, there have been attempts to engage in this work.

Janet Lieberman (1998), in a qualitative study of the Middle College program in LaGuardia, New York, explored the value of creating a collaboration between a local college and high school. Although the article lacked sound empirical evidence to support her perspectives, Lieberman shared lessons learned from the initiative. Specifically, Lieberman noted that, "all innovative collaborations need to concentrate on the student…and those involved observe and define common ground in helping students make connections between one level of learning and the next…" (p. 17). Amey et al. (2007) cited the growing popularity of collaborative programs ten years ago, however, Rodriquez et al. (2016[KN2][sm3]) noted a lack of empirical evidence for these partnerships, despite a sustained interest in improving community college retention and persistence.

Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, and Lewis (2005) conducted research to support the creation of a theoretical and contextual model for collaboration between community organizations and universities. The authors relied on empirical evidence from the fields of education and health to identify several components necessary to establish collaborations with a goal of addressing social issues and challenges within the community. Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2005) proposed a three-phase model, including, "gaining entry into the community, developing and sustaining the collaboration, and recognizing the outcomes and benefits" (p. 85).

Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2005) suggested that the relationship between partners should be interactive, mutually respectful, and focused on attending to the needs, goals, and styles of all partners. Similarly, Mayfield (2001) noted that to engage community and

education stakeholders, all voices should be heard, validated, and encouraged to remain open to change. Mayfield provided a historical context for engaged universities, which he defined as "a term for linking the different perspectives of university/community partnerships in higher education in the United States" (p. 231). He stressed the importance of leadership investment in the relationship and acknowledged that stakeholders needed to believe the investment would ultimately benefit their organizational outcomes and constituents.

Resulting from the collaborative efforts of six national organizations dedicated to improving post-secondary outcomes for all students, policy makers and educators developed collaborative goals to increase post-secondary degree and certification attainment by 2020 (McPhail, 2011). Since this commitment was made, initiatives to improve college and career persistence have been emerging in educational decision making at local, state, and national levels (McPhail, 2011; Rodriguez at al., 2016), although there are few established, empirically based programs to date (Venezia & Jaeger, 2013).

Researchers who studied collaborative relationships between public school districts and community colleges cited organizational similarities as the rationale for implementing the collaborative model (Amey, Eddy, & Ozaki, 2007; Barnett, 2011). These advocates noted that community colleges were originally an outgrowth of K-12 education, making collaboration a natural fit. Additionally, both institutions have the tradition of being open door establishments, not selective or exclusive places for the elite, and are often viewed as having a learner-centered focus (Boswell, 2000). Advocates of K-12 and community college collaborations supported the idea of beginning the college

and career agenda from preschool (Bartik, Hershbein, & Lachowska, 2015). With the advent of the Common Core State Standards movement, educational stakeholders adopted the term *P-20* to illustrate the goal of "creating a seamless P-20 education system" (Vandal, 2013, p. 1). There are several iterations of terms used to describe partnerships between K-12 districts and higher education, including P-14, P-16, P-20, K-14, K-16, and K-20. Each label addresses the specific needs of the demographic being represented (Pitre, 2011).

Opportunities for collaboration may be formed in a variety of ways, with the goals of increasing student persistence, retention, and completion through college. Amey et al. (2007) noted that it is critical to establish the goals of the partnership before implementing any systemic change. Rodriquez et al. (2016) proposed that with the current level of attention on community college education, there would be an emerging need to create collaborative partnerships to ameliorate the preparation gap for all students. The authors recommended that these partnerships should include a focus on early academic and social emotional interventions, college readiness measures that accurately reflect the changing demographics of students, and consistent support for students as they begin their community college process. They also suggested the development of policies with multiple stakeholder groups in mind to foster and strengthen the partnership, ultimately improving the odds of sustaining the model. The authors continued by discussing the responsibility of k-12 educators and community college leaders in building a successful model of collaboration.

Vargas and Venezia (2015) provided a framework for collaboration, including principles to guide educators, and examples of states or districts that have implemented

components of collaboration between K-12 and community college programs. The authors highlighted programs such as New York's Early Learning Schools, California's Linked Learning Initiative, Talent Search, and Tennessee SAILS (Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Supports). Additional programs, often titled Promise Programs, have been implemented nationally, and have attempted to support students as they transition through primary grades, high school, and ultimately to postsecondary education (Miller-Adams, 2009; Miller-Adams & Fiore, 2013). Created under President Obama's College Promise Initiative, many of these programs offer academic and social support, as well as financial compensation to attend college and persist to degree or certification attainment (Swanson, Watson, Ritter, & Nichols, 2016).

Michelle Miller-Adams, a researcher with the Upjohn Institute, defined Promise Programs, or communities, as those "that seek to transform themselves by making a long-term investment in education through place-based scholarships" (Miller-Adams, personal communication, June 2016; Upjohn Institute, 2015). Results from over 80 Promise Programs across the nation have demonstrated positive results in varying degrees (Swanson et al., 2016), with the most successful programs being the ones that consider a "whole child" approach, including support services, mentor programs, and community participation embedded as critical components, and starting as early as prenatal care (Brown, personal communication, June 2016).

In a 2012 report on the Oklahoma promise program, Mendoza and Mendez found that promise programs, in combination with federal support, were influential in college enrollment and persistence. The authors conducted a quantitative study using a longitudinal dataset provided by the state and found significant positive results for the

impact of promise programs on higher education enrollment, even when controlling for race, income, GPA, and type of academic institution. Specifically, they noted that promise programs appear to have a critical impact on retention during the first year of college enrollment, the time when most students are likely to drop out (Mendoza & Mendez, 2012).

In a recent case study on the Promise Program in Buffalo, New York, Robert Frahm (2016) wrote about the importance of developing a "Postsecondary Planning System to monitor student progress, using data such as attendance, behavior, health, and academic records" (p. 17). These planning systems, managed by city and school officials, track student performance and health and wellness indicators, flagging students that require additional wrap-around support services. This level of all-inclusive support has been critical to many of the promise programs implemented across the nation. The executive director of the Say Yes to Education Buffalo chapter shared, "This is re-imagining public education…this is not the traditional 9-to-3 school day focused on academics with some art and music and physical education mixed into it" (Frahm, 2016, p. 13).

Educational policy makers have suggested that there are systemic differences acting as barriers to successful collaborations between K-12 districts and community colleges (Boswell, 2000; Gomez, 2001; Rodriquez et al., 2016). Examples include differing goals, procedures and policies, beliefs about the role of students and teachers in the learning process, inconsistent data collection methods, and accountability measures (Vargas & Venezia, 2015). Advocates of a collaborative system noted that to create such a system would require a significant commitment from all stakeholders to actualize a

sustainable, successful model of implementation (Amey et al., 2007; Venezia et al., 2003). Rodriguez et al. (2016) offered examples of programs that have made a commitment to scale up their alignment and create collaborative systems of education through postsecondary completion. Several communities have implemented academic programs to increase college readiness by offering remediation in high school, dual credit options, and curricular alignment with community college courses.

College and Career Readiness

There is a strong focus on the inclusion of career and college readiness as an educational initiative in contemporary educational policy and decision making (Rodriquez et al., 2016). In a 2015 report from ACHIEVE, a non-profit organization focused on improving post-secondary outcomes for all students, the authors proposed that there is a critical need to prepare students for the increasing demands of the 21st century. Results from a national survey found that only 56% of employers and 35% of college instructors reported feeling satisfied with the level of college preparation students are receiving in high school (Achieve, Inc., 2015). In a similar 2016 study conducted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, researchers found that while the majority of jobs that pay a solid wage and offer opportunities for career advancement require some level of post-secondary attainment, there is a significant disconnect between actual attainment and opportunities currently available (Engle, 2016).

Many educational and business organizations have published studies on the strong economic argument for growing career and college ready students, including the Gates foundation, The Lumina foundation, and, locally, the Washington business council and Washington Roundtable. These papers highlight the academic, social, and emotional

skills required to be prepared for the rigor of college courses, and promote the value of obtaining a degree or certification in leading a productive life. Board (2007), in an article on the implications of education gaps in our country, noted that by 2020, there was likely to be an estimated shortfall of 14 million qualified workers with the education and skills required to fill the jobs available. Similarly, researchers from the Georgetown Public Policy Institute Center on Education and the Workforce (2014) found that by 2020, 30% of job openings will require at least some college or an associate degree (Carnevale, Strohl, & Smith, 2013).

Current data and research trends support the need for "career and college readiness" (Conley & McGaughy, 2012; McMahon, Griffith, Mariani, & Zyromski, 2017) however, there is little consistency in how the terms are interpreted. Many definitions available in the literature are driven by the agenda or purpose of the arguments being made (Conley, 2007). Additionally, the means to determine college readiness, including grade point averages, course progression, transcript review, and test scores, do not seem to accurately reflect the more holistic picture of readiness currently being proposed in the literature (Conley, 2007; Nagaoka & Holsapple, 2017).

Lewis, Nodine, and Venezia (2016) noted that in 2014, 36 states had their own definitions of career and college readiness, with variations in focus, level of detail, and overall message for what students should "know and be able to do" (p. 1) at the completion of high school. Lewis et al. conducted interviews with approximately 100 stakeholders across the country, including teachers, school administrators, and state policy leaders, and analyzed documents from multiple districts to better understand the differences and similarities in defining college and career readiness nationally. Although

initially the term “college readiness” was used to describe the academic skills required to transition successfully from high school to college without remediation, Lewis et al. (2016) noted that most of the current definitions of career and college readiness include critical thinking, social and emotional learning, perseverance or grit, and citizenship in addition to academic readiness. With the introduction of Common Core state standards, the term “college readiness” was broadened to “college and career readiness” to reflect the changing demographics of the country and include groups of students that were traditionally marginalized in our culture (Conley, 2007).

In an article addressing the need for a common language regarding career and college readiness, Clark (2015) defined college readiness as “the level of achievement a student needs to be ready to enroll and succeed-without remediation-in credit-bearing first-year postsecondary courses” (p. 1), and “career readiness” as the “level of foundational skills an individual needs for success in a career pathway or career cluster, coupled with the level of career planning skills needed to advance within a career path…” (p. 3). Clark continued by making connections between the two definitions, suggesting that there are additional characteristics, including motivational factors, emotional stability, and conscientiousness, that are required to be successful in both professional and academic arenas.

While difficult to operationally define, academic scholars and researchers agree on many of the components that combine to create a “career and college ready” student, including academic knowledge, cognitive and behavioral skills, and noncognitive factors, including motivation, persistence, and self-efficacy (Conley, 2007; Conley & French, 2014). Additionally, Vandal (2013) argued that what was needed was a change from

"traditional structures and methods" (p. 4) in assessing college readiness to a more collaborative, inclusive operational definition. Conley (2007) suggested that any comprehensive definition of career and college readiness should be robust and address the fundamental differences between high school competence and college preparedness. Conley cited the significant academic and social differences placed upon high school and college students, including the level of autonomy, amount of work, and lack of immediate access to the level of support available in high school classrooms.

In a 2015 qualitative exploration of career and college readiness policy in secondary schools, researchers conducted semi-structured interviews and focus groups with school counselors, administrators, teachers and students, to determine the barriers to becoming college and career ready from a student support perspective (Stone-Johnson, 2015). After coding emerging themes, the author concluded that "truly realizing college and career readiness would necessitate a massive shift in professional relationships in schools. In order to fully support students' college and career readiness, the entire school team needs to be involved" (p.40).

Despite multiple definitions, there is current research focused on the notion of building a "career and college ready" system, rather than creating a "career and college" ready student. Board (2007) suggested that the responsibility for creating college and career ready students should fall on the entire system of education, from elementary through postsecondary learning. In an article on the alignment of high school and higher education to foster college and career readiness, Treisman (2013) noted that any definition of college readiness would need to address the disconnection between high

school and higher education and should take into account the "enormous and healthy diversity of American higher education institutions" (p. 2).

Summary of Literature Review

There is significant evidence to support the value of collaboration (Hattie, 2012; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2007; Slavin, 2014; Slavin, Hurly, & Chamberlain, 2003). Organizations realize that to meet the diverse needs of their clients in effective and efficient ways they may benefit from collaboration with other organizations (Gray, 1989; Henri, Mohan, & Yanacopulous, 2004). In business and healthcare, these practices are becoming increasingly more common. While leaders in education have promoted the benefits of working with organizations outside of the school system, these have often been partnerships, where the outside agency provides short-term directed support, financial support, or training for the school district (Paletta et al., 2009; Siegel, 2008; Tilhou et al., 2018). It is less common to find school districts and collaborative partners sharing the decision making, sharing the power structure, and building a system designed for the students (Vargas & Venezia, 2015). Additionally, school districts design initiatives that focus on student success while they are in the district. Once 12th grade is complete, the district often loses that connection to the students. Promise Programs have emerged as a more comprehensive plan for supporting students through postsecondary completion (Frahm, 2016; Mendoza & Mendez, 2012). These programs often involve financial support with parameters around how the money is spent. While these programs are new, and the research is young, there is growing evidence that students benefit from this level of involvement and support (Miller-Adams & Fiore, 2013; Swanson et al., 2016).

There is a clear need to explore the potential for these collaborations to support student outcomes beyond high school graduation. The empirical evidence presented in the literature review highlighted several characteristics and components needed to form successful IOCs in business and healthcare. While these professional sectors have different goals than educational institutions, they are similar in that they provide diverse services to clients with a range of needs and expectations.

Several essential characteristics of IOC were identified in the literature, including trust (Braganza, 2016; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001), relationship building (Palinkas et al., 2014; Sharma & Kearins, 2011), leadership for change (Kirtman & Fullen, 2016; Shechtman & Toren, 2009), interdependence (Lewin, 1947; Sharma & Kearins, 2011), and a solid organizational structure and framework (Cooper & Shumate, 2012). These characteristics align with Lewin's theories of group dynamics, change, and leadership (Lewin, 1947; 1958), in which he proposed that group work, the foundation for collaboration, must be based on interdependence of members, and a focus on a common, mutually beneficial goal.

As the conversation about public education moves from a focus on graduating from high school to college completion (Carnevale et al., 2013; Siegel, 2008), there is a need for empirical support to inform these efforts. This case study was designed to add to the growing body of empirical evidence to better understand the processes and procedures needed to develop and sustain these IOCs.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research methodology that will be used to explore the development and implementation of an IOC between multi-disciplinary organizations working towards a common goal of postsecondary success. Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the research questions, the research design, the participants, the sampling process, and the methods for collecting and analyzing data. Additionally, the limitations of the study are presented.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand the process of establishing and maintaining an IOC between organizations with a shared vision and goal. Through qualitative methods of investigation, the researcher attempted to identify themes that emerged to understand the collaboration that was formed and continues to guide the efforts of one school district, and community, in Washington State. The first research question examined the development of the IOC to support student postsecondary success from Kindergarten to career or college. The second research question explored the processes and procedures of maintaining this collaboration over a sustained period of time. The research questions were as follows:

Research Question 1: How was this IOC developed, nurtured, and maintained?

Research Question 2: What does this IOC mean to the stakeholders involved?

Research Design

The research design for this study followed a qualitative case study methodology. Qualitative research is often exploratory in nature and based on the philosophical assumptions of the researcher (Creswell, 2013). Patton (2002) explained that qualitative methodology is indicated for studies conducted in naturalistic settings where there is no attempt to manipulate variables that determine an outcome. Qualitative research is context-specific, and the researcher may embed themselves into the dynamic environment to document processes and change throughout the course of the study (Patton, 2002). These opportunities to witness and document the change process are critical to the strength of the study, and, as Patton (2002) suggested, often include the researcher as an *instrument of the study*. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) discussed the role of the researcher in the qualitative research process, highlighting the importance of the emic perspective, which focuses on the insider's understanding and experience.

Within the qualitative research paradigm there are several approaches to consider based on the research questions, nature of the information available, and purpose of the study (Creswell, 2013). The research design for this study was an exploratory case study research design (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009). Case study research is defined as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth, and within its real-life context…" (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Yin proposed that the definition of a case study is complex, and should include the scope of a case study as well as technical strategies, including data collection, analysis, and the logic of the design.

In response to criticisms regarding the empiricism of qualitative research methods, Hancock and Algozzine (2006) explained that while not generalizable,

researchers may use a case study design to better understand a specific group, individual, or event. Additionally, Hancock and Algozzine noted that case study research provides descriptive analysis of complex, dynamic phenomena using the language and context provided from the actual participants of the study, bringing new meaning and insights to those involved. Similarly, Yin (1981) noted, "Consider the repertoire of empirical research strategies from a pluralistic rather than a hierarchical perspective. Each strategy is best suited to a different set of conditions, and each strategy is therefore likely to be favored whenever such conditions prevail" (p. 98).

Researcher Experience

I decided to embark on this qualitative study for several reasons. Currently, I work as an educational researcher. I visit schools, observe instruction, interview district, state, and community level stakeholders, and write evaluation reports for schools and grant-making organizations. In this capacity, I have formed assumptions about how and why people act the way they do. Much of this data is anecdotal, and has been documented in personal field notes and conversations with peers.

Prior to becoming a researcher, I was an art therapist. I worked with students in public and private schools. My students and I spent time exploring decision making, discussing peer interactions, understanding motivation, and addressing their feelings of stress, anxiety, and disappointment. The work with my students set the stage for my interest in research. The experiences that I shared with my students were similar to the experiences of the teachers, administrators, counselors, and community members that I interview now. In both situations, people wanted change, but were often fearful or uncertain about how to make change happen.

In Cold Spring School District, something sparked a comprehensive change in the actions and beliefs of community members. Unlike other communities I had worked with, the teachers and leaders in Cold Spring seemed eager to talk about their process. During interviews, meetings, and informal conversations, I was moved by the passion and investment of people from different backgrounds and areas of expertise. Teachers, school administrators, support staff, community members, business leaders, and college faculty were deeply committed to improving the lives of these students.

I was honored to sit in on these meetings and felt the respect and sense of community that was driving the decision making. I also became curious about the fundamental properties of this collaboration. I began to research interorganizational collaboration (IOC) in education and found a gap in the literature. The fields of business and healthcare were implementing and studying this model of collaboration to provide comprehensive services to their clients, yet I found few examples of a school district documenting their collaborative decision making to support student outcomes, especially those postsecondary outcomes outside of the traditional scope of support for public school students. Empirical studies that did explore school district and private sector collaborations were focused on the outcomes of the work, not specifically on the collaboration itself.

The current study was an examination of the critical components of the Cold Spring Community IOC. It was also a study of the motivation behind this collaboration, and the story of one community coming together to effect change. As the lead researcher, I have formed relationships with many of the people involved in this process and I am invested in seeing this collaboration continue to grow and develop. This perspective has

provided me access into the collaboration and will inevitably impact the telling of the story.

Participants

The participants in this research study included members of each organization involved in the collaboration formed during the tenure of the project. Within the school district, participants included teachers and teacher leaders, principals, the superintendent and assistant superintendent. Additionally, leadership from the community foundation, the independent research organization, the community college, and community members participating in the collaborative committee were included.

Sampling Process

The participants for this study were selected in a purposeful sample. Purposeful sampling, common in qualitative research, is a method that "groups participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question" (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005, p. 5). This sampling strategy is appropriate for case study research as it allows the researcher to select participants that provide information directly related to the research questions (Creswell, 2013). All participants whose perspectives were included in this study were actively involved in the CSSD IOC, and their interviews were selected based on their sustained participation, availability, and knowledge about the initiative.

Participants were provided with informed consent to participate, an ethical standard for all research (Mack et al., 2005). I discussed my intention to use their words and perspectives in this dissertation, although the information gathered was part of the ongoing research initiative funded by the school district and community foundation.

Documents were included only when participants agreed to have their survey responses, meeting notes, and interview transcripts analyzed for this dissertation study. Additionally, participants were provided with information regarding the purpose of the study, the amount of time required of them, and any risks and issues of confidentiality (Mack et al., 2005). Interview transcriptions were made available to all participants for their review.

Artifacts

Several artifacts were used in this case study design. Yin (2009) noted the importance of including multiple records in qualitative research designs to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. Survey data, interviews, document review, meeting notes, and existing descriptive and demographic student data were included to provide a comprehensive understanding of the findings for this study.

Surveys were administered electronically through SurveyMonkey, an on-line service provider. Survey questions were written in alignment with *The Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007), a research document created in 2007 to support continuous improvement efforts for schools in Washington State. The characteristics were identified from the coding and analysis of 20 empirical studies focused on high performing schools across the nation (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). In total, 311 families and 81 teachers completed the surveys in the Cold Spring School District. Survey responses were collected and downloaded for analysis. An example of the survey questions can be found in Appendix D for the staff survey, and Appendix E for the family survey.

Interview questions followed a semi-structured interview protocol and were written by this researcher in collaboration with colleagues from the research organization

(See Appendix B). Meeting and field notes were hand written, then typed and stored on the company's secure server. Documents, including school improvement plans, vision and mission statements, and action plans were provided by the CSSD. Demographic data was collected by researchers from the school district, the state, and national data sources.

Data Collection

Secondary data was used in the analysis of this case study (Smith & Smith, 2008). Secondary data is defined as data that has been collected prior to the study, often by another researcher (Dale, Arber, & Procter, 1988; Smith & Smith, 2008). By incorporating secondary data, researchers can include a broader and deeper scope than they may have been able to collect independently (Smith & Smith, 2008).

The IOC being studied was formed in 2013. Prior to my involvement in the initiative, several researchers from The DSA Group worked with the school district to conduct surveys, interviews, and focus groups. As part of my work with the IOC, six interviews were conducted with seven key steering committee members representing each organization involved in the collaboration. A semi-structured interview protocol was used. Participants in these interviews were asked if they were willing to be recorded. Each interview lasted approximately 1 hour. Interviews were initially transcribed by TranscribeMe, an on-line transcription company, and used formatively to support the ongoing initiative. Interviewees were explicitly asked if their interviews could be used for this dissertation. The interviews were then coded and themed by this researcher and two additional Ph.D. candidates specifically for this research study. Yin (2009) suggested that case study designs should be time bound. For this study, although the IOC persists, the

data collected reflects the original parameters of the initiative, as the researcher was interested in exploring the formation of the IOC, not the outcomes.

In addition to interviews, school district employees, families, and students received a survey in 2013 to solicit their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses within their school community. This survey was written by three researchers from The DSA Group and was aligned with The Office of Public Instruction's (OSPIs) *Nine Characteristics of Highly Effective Schools* (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). Results from this survey were included in this case study to support research questions and provide structural corroboration (Creswell, 2013) to increase the credibility of the study. These surveys provided information on the conditions necessary to begin the change process and engage in a comprehensive, collaborative initiative, supporting research question 1.

Quantitative descriptive data was presented to substantiate and support the context for this study. This data was retrieved from several sources, including the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), the Cold Spring School District, and the Washington Education Research and Data Center (ERDC). Document review included the collection and coding of school improvement plans, school action plans, and mission and vision statements created by school level staff and leadership throughout the duration of this initiative.

Finally, meeting notes were gathering during quarterly meetings from 2013-2017. Notes were typed and stored on The DSA Group's shared storage drive. Meetings included whole committee meetings, as well as smaller, individual meetings with key initiative leaders. Several researchers from The DSA Group gathered these notes

throughout this initiative. Researchers were contacted to ask permission to use their notes to support this dissertation.

Reliability and Validity

Quality research designs require evidence of reliability and validity. While these terms are often assigned to positivist research paradigms (Shenton, 2004), many qualitative researchers have adopted terms that address these concepts from a constructivist paradigm, more closely aligning with the intentions of qualitative research methodology (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) noted that, “While the credibility in quantitative research depends on instrument construction, in qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument" (p. 14). Golafshani (2006) suggested that for a qualitative study, reliability and validity are not considered independent terms, but instead are used interchangeably to define the trustworthiness of the study.

One term used to replace the term validity in qualitative research is *trustworthiness* (Hill, 2012). Trustworthiness is defined as the amount of confidence in the data, interpretation, and methods used to establish a quality research design (Polit & Beck, 2014). Hill, Thompson, and Williams (1997) suggested that researchers attempt to provide stability of findings, or the point at which the researcher is confident that no new information would be revealed by continuing further analysis. This is similar to the notion of saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 2017), and supports trustworthiness of qualitative research designs.

Guba (1981) proposed four constructs necessary to conduct a trustworthy study; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Of these concepts, Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified credibility as the most important to establishing

trustworthiness. The authors suggested that a credible qualitative study incorporates operationally defined measures, prolonged engagement with the subjects being studied, triangulation of data sources, and rigorous peer review of the study to reduce researcher bias. Additionally, Creswell and Miller (2000) included quality and rigor as terms addressing the reliability and validity of a study from the qualitative perspective.

For this case study, the researcher attempted to demonstrate trustworthiness, credibility, and rigor through data collection methods, analysis, and reporting aligned with sound qualitative methods. Sandelowski (1993) suggested attending to personal bias when interpreting findings. Additionally, the author recommended keeping excellent documentation of all data collection, and interpreting data consistently and transparently. Patton (2002) suggested that triangulating data, by using multiple sources and methods, can increase the rigor and trustworthiness of the study. Creswell and Miller (2000) defined triangulation as "a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study" (p. 126). Within this study the researcher included multiple methods and types of data in the analysis, including interview transcriptions, descriptive data, survey results, and document review. Rich, thick descriptions were used to generate a rigorous study (Creswell, 2013). Two additional researchers participated in the coding and theming of data to increase reliability and minimize the impact of researcher bias (Creswell, 2013).

Data Analysis

This exploratory case study included the analysis of interview transcripts, survey responses, meeting notes, descriptive data, and document review. Yin (2009) noted the importance of triangulating data in qualitative research to increase trustworthiness.

Creswell (2013) identified multiple steps necessary for qualitative researchers to conduct their analysis, including organization of the data, reading and reducing the data into themes identified through a rigorous coding process, and interpreting the findings in connection with the theoretical foundations and propositions driving the research questions for the study. Hill (2012) suggested an inductive approach to analyzing qualitative data, in which the researcher comes to conclusions only after gathering, coding, and theming their evidence.

The qualitative analysis for this study followed the modified Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) approach (Hill, 2012; Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). To begin this case study analysis, the primary researcher collected and organized all relevant data in a data table to identify how the data supports and connects to the theoretical propositions guiding the research (Yin, 2009). Once relevant data was identified, the primary researcher and two fellow doctoral students independently read interview transcripts and began coding and identifying themes from the data.

The process of coding data is critical to the qualitative research design (Creswell, 2013), and involves "aggregating the text or visual data into small categories of information, seeking evidence for the code from different databases used in the study, and then assigning a label to the code" (p. 184). Hill (2012) suggested beginning with a *domain list,* defined as "a list of the meaningful and unique topic areas examined in the interview" (p. 104). For this study, an initial list of domains was developed based on the review of literature, although Hill noted the importance of remaining open minded to new domains as they emerge.

Following the creation of a domain list, each researcher individually read and chunked interview data into specific domains. The lead researcher developed a consensus version of the domain list to continue the analysis (Hill, 2012). This list was used to guide researchers as they independently developed core ideas. Hill noted the importance of attending to details and remaining engaged when identifying core ideas to conduct a credible, trustworthy analysis. The final step in the CQR process involved a cross-analysis of each domain individually. This cross-analysis helped researchers to establish categories within each domain. Researchers then discussed their findings and reached consensus (Hill, 2012).

In addition to coding interview data, the primary researcher conducted a review of existing documents and meeting notes to develop a comprehensive understanding of the context and actions influencing the collaboration being studied.

Limitations

There are limitations to this research study. Although Lincoln and Guba (1985) discussed the importance of the researcher building a strong and sustained relationship with research subjects during a qualitative study, the authors acknowledged that this can cause complications with bias when coding, theming, and analyzing data. To minimize the chance for bias during analysis, this researcher engaged in an intercoder agreement process (Creswell, 2013) with two colleagues to analyze survey responses, interview transcriptions, and additional documents. However, any notes gathered during the study were analyzed through this researcher's lens, which is a natural and appropriate part of the qualitative process.

Additionally, this study was conducted in one community in Washington State, with a relatively homogeneous demographic, and a substantial funding source to support the work. While case study research is not statistically generalizable due to the descriptive nature of the design, Polit and Beck (2014) suggested that with rich, thick descriptions and a sound theoretical foundation, qualitative research may have transferability, which allows for the reader to determine the extent to which aspects of the study might apply to their personal situations and experiences.

Chapter 4

Results

This study explored the interorganizational collaboration (IOC) developed overtime between a Washington State school district and the surrounding community. A purposeful sample of organizational leaders was used for this study. Data collected was part of an on-going evaluation for an initiative within the CSSD. As such, secondary data was used in the analysis of this case study (Smith & Smith, 2008). Several artifacts, including survey data, interviews, planning documents, meeting and field notes, and descriptive and demographic student data were included in the analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the findings for this study.

The data was analyzed to address the two research question in this exploratory case study: 1) How was this interorganizational collaboration developed, nurtured, and maintained?, and 2) What did the interorganizational collaboration mean to the community? Interview data from organizational leaders (n = 7), survey responses from family members (n = 311) and school staff (n = 81), archival research reports from 2013-2017 (n = 3), and meeting notes from 2013 through 2017 were included for analysis.

During the modified CQR process, three researchers collaboratively read all interviews and developed a preliminary list of domains, identified by chunking the data into text blocks with similar thematic content. These domains were then used to guide line by line data coding, with each researcher working independently, then meeting together to reach consensus on all interview transcripts. Domains, categories and sub-categories emerged during the coding process. Once consensus was reached, the coding

process was complete, and frequencies were determined for each domain and category. A complete list of domains and categories is presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Domain and Category Frequency Table

Domains	Frequency	Categories	Frequency
Evaluation	180	Needs Assessment	40
		Research	20
		Data Driven	42
		Feedback	40
		Evaluation Cycle	21
		Outcomes	17
Community	209	Acting as a catalyst	39
		Building capacity	30
		Strategic partnerships	101
		Changing culture	39
Human Factors	124	Inclusion and voice	14
		Leadership	41
		Shared Ownership	22
		Building relationships	28
		Strategic Selection	19
Process Factors	150	Intentionality	13
		Prioritization	73
		Ramped approach	12
		Shared focus	32
		Long-term	20

The four domains which surfaced from the qualitative data sets were 1) Evaluation, 2) Community, 3) Process Factors, and 4) Human Factors. Figure 1 represents a conceptual

model of the domains and categories. Each of these domains is described below with related categories and sub-categories.

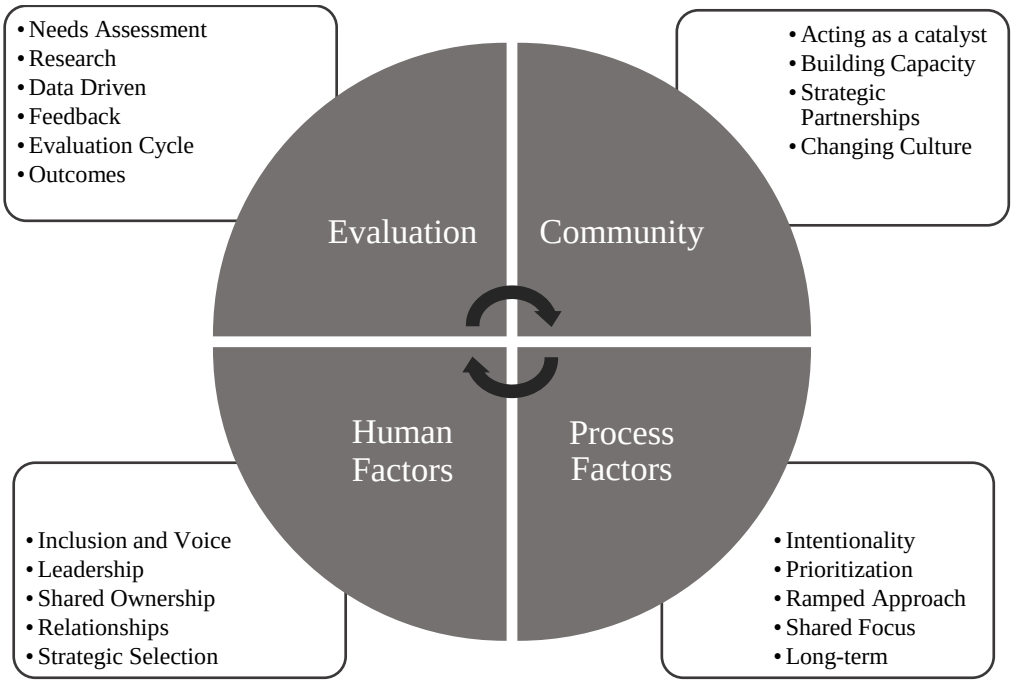

Figure 1. Conceptual model of the domains and categories identified during the qualitative coding process. Although the research questions for this study were not focused on the outcomes of the IOC efforts, during analysis it was difficult to completely separate perspectives on the collaboration itself from perspectives on the objectives or goals of the initiative. This connection between the IOC and the collaboration goals was an additional theme that emerged during analysis and will be included in the discussion section of this study. See Appendix C for the semi-structured interview protocol used for this study, Appendix D for *The Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools*, Appendix E for staff survey questions, and Appendix F for family survey questions. Additionally, examples of research reports written for the IOC are included in

Appendices G, H and I. Line citations are provided in text. Pseudonyms were used to replace the actual names of the places and participants included in the study.

As the principal evaluator for this initiative, my perspective and relationships with key stakeholders was a relevant aspect of the data analysis. Over the three years that I participated in this process, I was able to interact with collaboration leaders, as well as school employees, community members, college faculty, and students. Members of this community were extremely proud of the accomplishments of this collaborative initiative, and often shared anecdotes about their experiences and perceptions of change over time. Many of those anecdotes were not recorded in the moment, but were included in this qualitative analysis as they added to the narrative and helped to communicate authentic stakeholder voice. Additionally, information retrieved from documents was woven into the narrative to substantiate the qualitative analysis.

Domain 1: Evaluation

Participant statements coded as *evaluation* were identified by researchers as those that directly referenced the research and data which guided and supported the collaborative initiative. The domain *evaluation* was coded 180 times, representing 27.1% of the coded interview responses. Within the *evaluation* domain, 6 categories were identified: A) the value of a needs assessment, B) the need for research, C) data driven decision making, D) the importance of feedback, E) cycle of evaluation, and F) initiative outcomes.

Category A: The Value of a Needs Assessment

Within the *evaluation* domain, the category *needs assessment* was coded 40 times, representing 22.3% of the items coded in this domain. Statements were identified for this

category if they addressed the evaluative steps taken by the IOC at the start of the CSSD initiative. In 2013, the school district superintendent, assistant superintendent, and Cold Spring Foundation leaders engaged in a discussion about the needs of their school and community. ER, the CSSD superintendent, shared how he instigated this conversation: "When I first came [to the district], we met monthly with our teacher's union, and the first item on the agenda every Wednesday morning when we met were… complaints about technology and it not working, and we got tired of it" (ER, 263-265). ER identified the Cold Spring Foundation as a potential partner in securing funding to ameliorate the problem, and reached out to ask the foundation if they would be willing to provide support. KS, CFO of the Cold Spring Foundation, talked about this initial meeting with the CSSD:

> I knew of them, but as far as talking about the school system, that was really the first time we really sat down to talk anything serious. So what started out as a scholarship discussion turned into an assessment of the Cold Spring school district. (KS, 85-86)

During this initial meeting participants from the foundation and the school district shared their beliefs about their school and community, but neither organization had looked at data. KS acknowledged, "We didn't really have any understanding of the school system" (KS, 67-68).

This conversation led to a decision to conduct a needs assessment in the district (Appendix A). ER and MB worked with the Foundation to identify an external organization that could undertake this process. The DSA Group was selected based on an existing relationship with a community member who provided a reference. DB, president

of The DSA Group, commented on this process: “So we didn't know much about Cold Spring at that time, and we got word through a third party that they were looking for somebody to do a needs assessment…” (DB, 26-27). This needs assessment was intended to give the district and the foundation a clearer picture of the status of student learning in the community. KS shared,

> That's when the DSA Group was retained to do that initial assessment to look under the hood to see, how is the Cold Spring school district performing? There were really no expectations of what we would find, or really what outcomes we were looking for…. (KS, 65-67)

ER commented, “The Foundation came in wanting to support the District, but they weren't exactly sure how to do that. As it turns out, the needs assessment was designed to figure out, how could they help support the District?” (524-526).

As part of this needs assessment, researchers from The DSA visited all schools in the district to observe classrooms (n = 150) using the STAR protocol, an observation tool developed in 2008 by The DSA Group (Appendix B). The STAR Classroom Observation protocol is an instrument used to measure the extent to which effective, cognitive-based instructional practices are present in a classroom. The protocol was developed through a process that established construct validity, concurrent validity, content validity, and face validity (Baker, Clay, & Gratama, 2005). Over a 10-year time period, the construct has been tested through multiple exploratory factor analyses (alpha level = .90 on the 12 STAR Indicators) and has maintained a significant correlation with student achievement. Results from the data collection revealed that, district-wide, 36% of classrooms visited

were aligned with the constructs measured on the STAR Classroom Observation protocol.

Researchers also interviewed willing school staff, including teachers, administrators, classified staff, and district office personnel using a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix C). Families, staff, and students were invited to participate in on-line perception surveys with questions aligned with *The Nine Characteristics of Highly Effective Schools* (See Appendices D, E, and F). Results from surveys and data collections were integrated into reports for each school, and the district overall. DB shared,

> So we did the Needs Assessment, [and] it resulted in each school receiving its own report. And every report had demographic data related to the school. It had student outcomes. It had the nine characteristics of effective schools. And it also had the classroom observation data. And then we tried to be committed to just coming up with a couple of recommendations for them. (DB, 58-65)

Interviewees identified this needs assessment as the starting point of the CSSD initiative. DB described it as, "[the] baseline that we could then start working from," (DB, 147) and RD noted, "we didn't even have the full sense yet of where we were going to go with this…so we started noticing patterns…" (RD, 132-134). KS shared, "Because honestly, when we started, we didn't even know what we were going to get. It was let's learn, how are you doing?" (728-729). DB commented on the leaderships' ability to remain open to findings, noting, "But they were among one of the high-performing administrative teams. They were wide open. They seemed not defensive in any way, not concerned. They

seemed to be open about the data" (DB, 107-110). MB, district assistant superintendent, added,

> We just need [ed] to figure it out, we're open when we need. We were just open to what… is there something else do we need? So we just opened access, we talked to the union…the teacher's union, school administration, the foundation, the school board. We like brought in this- it was a collaborative decision to bring in this group to look everywhere. (MB, 112-116)

In addition to qualitative data collection, researchers gathered quantitative demographic and descriptive data. DB shared that multiple data points were used to "triangulate the data" (DB, 340) for reliability and validity. Researchers from The DSA Group gathered student outcome data, including student graduation rates, college attendance rates, college persistence rates, standardized test scores, and College Bound scholarship enrollment. Researchers incorporated this data into the needs assessment. MB shared, "What we needed to do was to help them be successful, so they brought back a report and we looked at it…" (MB, 365-367).

Leaders from the school district, the foundation, and the research group conducted a thorough review and discussion of the findings from the needs assessment. This discussion helped IOC leaders name the school district's initiative: *Beyond K-12 Student Achievement Initiative.* The reports were then shared with school level stakeholders, and the initiative was introduced based on the results of the needs assessment. From the initial district level needs assessment, several recommendations were provided to guide the collaboration's work moving forward. These included: 1) build college awareness throughout the system, 2) develop a college and career dashboard, 3) develop strong

instructional habits, 4) increase opportunities for teacher collaboration, and 5) implement a comprehensive guidance system using advisory as a delivery method (Cold Spring School District Needs Assessment, 2013). This report is included in Appendix A.

Throughout the years of data analyzed for this initiative, IOC leaders and school level stakeholders referenced the needs assessment in informal conversations and discussions. During one visit to the school district, RD and this researcher had an informal conversation about the early days of the initiative. She shared her experience of feeling overwhelmed, and surprised, by the results of the needs assessment. As a teacher, and a community member, she had been under the impression that students in her district were succeeding past high school, yet the data showed that only 38% of their high school students were completing a degree within 6 years of high school graduation, and only 20% were receiving a bachelor's degree. Other teachers throughout the school district shared similar experiences, and expressed feeling honored to have been asked for their feedback and opinions at the start of the initiative.

In addition to interviews and informal conversations, agenda and meeting notes were reviewed to identify any connections or reference to the needs assessment. In Career and College Readiness Committee (CCRC) meeting notes dating July 2014 through March 2016, agenda items were aligned with the outcomes of the initial needs assessment. Specifically, committee leaders identified their action plans for continuing to weave their goal of "college and career readiness" into instruction, in order for "kids to follow their vision…and be aware, eligible, and prepared through a systemic approach" The CCRC used the needs assessment as a framework for their meetings, although their

specific agenda items became more sophisticated and nuanced over time, as they began implementing components of the initiative.

Category B: The Need for Research

The category *research* was coded 20 times within the *evaluation* domain, representing 11.1% of responses from interviewees within this domain. Statements reflected the importance of using research to guide decision making. KS talked about how research supported the foundation's initial willingness to engage in this collaborative process. He shared, "I actually started to do a little research on my own… what I learned was that there's a lot more to success than money, and there's a lot more to success than having a good school district with great teaching" (KS, 234-235). The school district leadership, the Cold Spring Foundation, and The DSA Group worked together to research what other school districts were doing to better prepare their students for postsecondary success. As part of this process, the IOC leaders reached out to include Arlington College, the local community college, in their discussions. KS admitted he was surprised by his own findings on community efforts to fully fund college in order to increase persistence rates. Referring to the efforts of Kalamazoo, a community leading the efforts to fully fund college for all students, he shared:

> I realized what a big effort it is, if a school district like that could have given their kids full rides, and are having trouble, and they have resources to address those issues. They kind of paved the way for us in a way, kind of opened our eyes to how important these other issues were. Yeah, how complex. It's not just academics, it's not just money. Or tuition, and so forth, it's a lot of complicated issues. (KS, 478-484)

Using research became a pattern for the IOC. AL commented, “Well, I think that when you look at research, it' a little bit easier to understand that there's a purpose to all of it, you know” (AL, 51-52). RC commented, “…and it started the conversation. And so were allowed to have our conversation, we were guided but… the DSA Group was bringing in data for us and bringing our data in, also bringing in what other schools were doing” (RC, 177-180). Between 2013 and 2017, the IOC asked DSA researchers to conduct literature reviews focused on postsecondary outcomes, college promise programs, community college success, reengagement, college readiness, and guided pathways. One example of the research process was shared by MB:

> When we moved beyond K-12, the DSA Group went out again and did national best practices, brought the research back. We read that research and then put together a plan and then they funded that plan. But then when there were pieces that didn't work, then we could go back to the drawing board. It isn't like you had-- well, you said this is what you'll do, you can't [change]. (MB, 647-651)

DB felt that “…the Foundation was using us as a research wing, to actually decide how they would actually give to the District” (DB, 230-231). This was confirmed when ER shared, “And we don't just make up programs, we just-- everything is research based. And the donors even want to hear about that and they want, definitely want ways that we can measure everything that we're doing” (ER, 715-717).

Examples of research reports generated for the IOC included; *Cold Spring School District College Readiness Report* (2014) (Appendix G), *Cold Spring School District Education Initiatives Project Research Report*, (2015) (Appendix H), and *Arlington College Student Services and Academic Program Audit*: *Executive Summary* (2016)

(Appendix I). These reports were reviewed during IOC steering committee meetings and CCRC meetings, and action items were identified and implemented.

In addition to research generated by The DSA Group, IOC partners met with The Washington Roundtable in August 2016 to review current research on postsecondary success in Washington State. This meeting included a review of the CSSD initiative, followed by research on state-wide outcomes for students, and the economic argument to improve these outcomes for local communities. Research from this meeting helped influence decisions to focus on reliably tracking data for postsecondary credentials and apprenticeships, as well as a continued emphasis on high school graduation and college eligibility. Washington Roundtable leaders also spoke to the importance of creating community awareness and connections regarding student success.

Category C: Data Driven Decision Making

The category *data driven decision making* was coded 42 times within the *evaluation* domain, representing 23.3% of the items coded within this domain. This category was coded based on interview responses which directly referenced internal school district and community data used to impact the IOC processes. *Data driven decision making* differed from *research* in that interviewees discussed the importance of understanding and utilizing their own data to make an impact, building upon the foundation of research. Interviewees also talked about the need to consistently and regularly look at their own data. DB shared, “I think something that feeds all this, though, is ongoing key performance indicators. Like, if you're not keeping track of whether you're getting better at anything, then everybody's just working really hard” (DB, 601-603).

Although the needs assessment included baseline data, throughout the years of data collected for this initiative key performance indicators (KPIs) were tracked, analyzed, and used to determine where the IOC would focus their work. These KPIs were presented annually at collaboration steering committee meetings (see Appendix J). Examples of KPIs are presented here, and include high school graduation rates (Figure 2), rates of enrollment at Arlington College (Figure 3), and postsecondary persistence (Figure 4). Interviewees noted that the collection of KPI's changed over time, as new areas of need were identified by the IOC. One example of this was the decision to include data on certificate and apprenticeship programs in postsecondary outcome totals after learning about the needs of their community from collaborating with the Washington Roundtable.

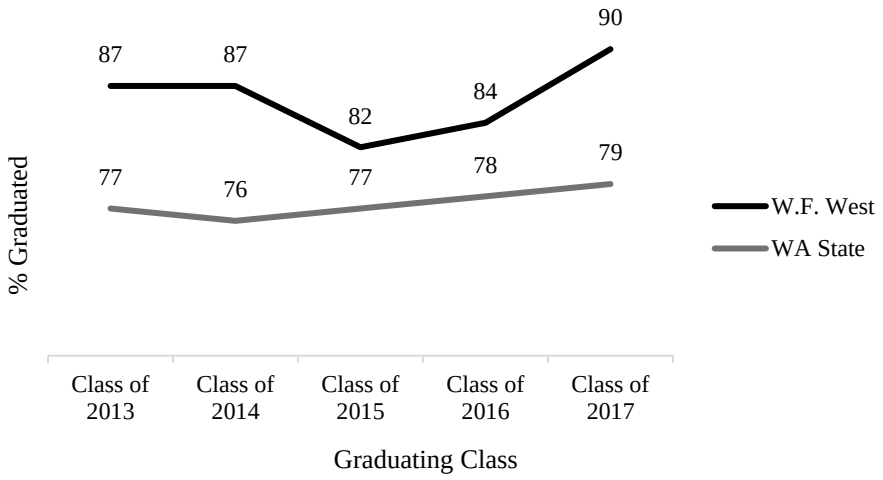

Figure 2. High school graduation rates for Cold Spring students over time, from 2013 to 2017.

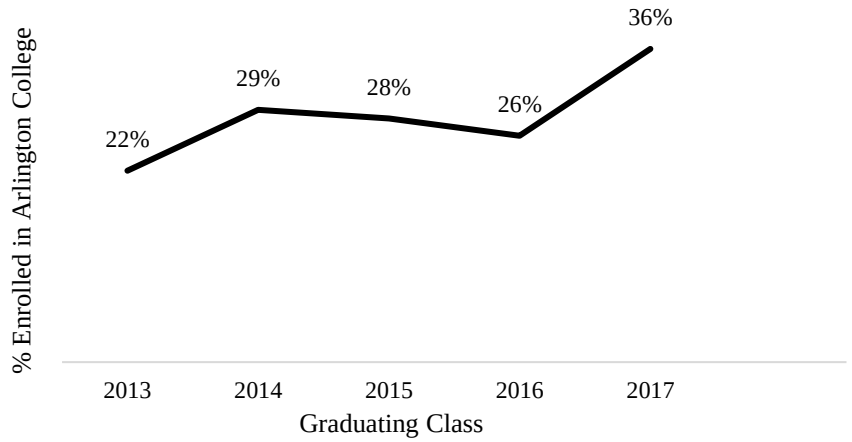

Figure 3. Percent of graduates enrolling in Arlington College in the fall following high school graduation.

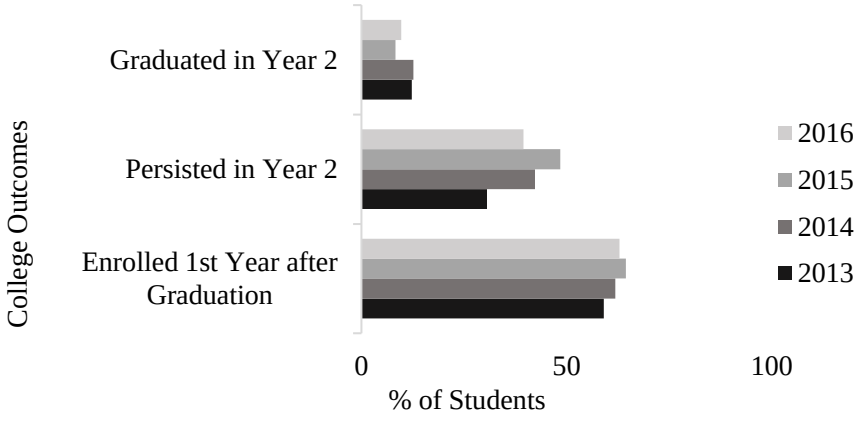

Figure 4. College persistence and graduation rates for CSSD students.

DB commented on the importance of the KPIs to the IOC, noting that the data helped the leaders make informed decisions based on real time, personal data. Additionally, MB believed that these data discussions were an opportunity to connect and strengthen the IOC, noting, "…it's really been about meaningful conversations, looking at the data and listening when there is push back" (MB, 561-562). DB's perspective confirmed this:

> I think that once they see the nature of the data, and they see their own voice in the reports. They see all the things that they said, and how they feel about it. And the plans are developed around what they said. They actually, they feel listened to, and empowered. (DB, 548-550)

RD also shared, "…we started out really looking hard at the data, trying to figure out what does it even mean" (RD, 350-351). These conversations helped IOC leaders and school level stakeholders to better understand their students' needs and begin to generate a Career and College Ready Plan (CCRP) for the district, with input from all schools. As part of the CCRP, schools created annual, data driven plans, logic models, and timelines. An example of a planning document is included in Appendix K. These documents became foundational in decision making, and were referenced consistently throughout the initiative. RD noted that these data plans and logic models guided tough conversations, sharing:

> …so if we're supporting kids to college, is the support working? If it doesn't what do we need to do differently? So having those data, and then having some hard conversations, but the data drives it and you're able to go, okay. (RD, 846-849)

Staff survey responses during the needs assessment also provided insight into the importance of data to this collaboration. When asked whether staff members were provided training on interpreting and using student data, less than 30% of high school and middle school staff agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (Figure 5).

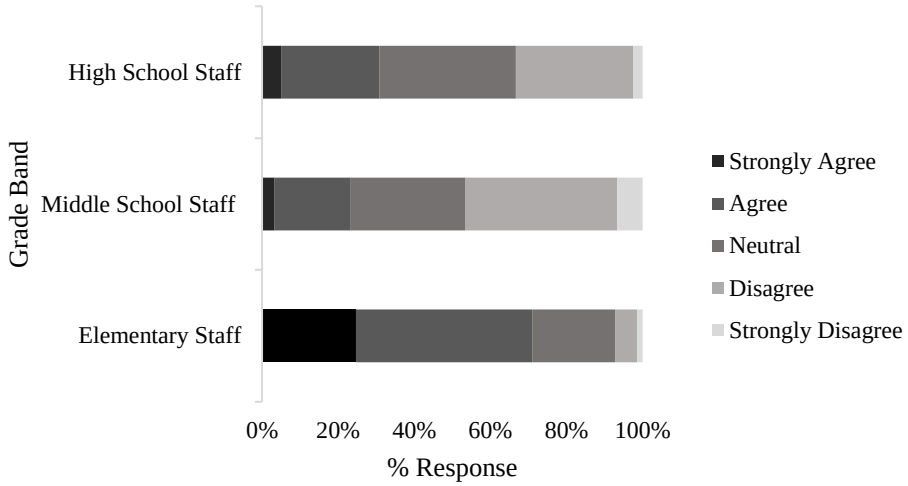

Figure 5. Q10. Staff members receive training on interpreting and using student data.

IOC leadership considered these responses, and embedded training on using data into professional development opportunities. These professional development needs were reflected in CCRC planning documents. Additionally, CCRCs devoted time to looking at and discussing data, and The DSA Group helped to systematize the way the IOC collected KPIs to build capacity and support sustainability.

Category D: The Importance of Feedback

The category *feedback* was coded 40 times within the *evaluation* domain, representing 22.3% of the items coded within this domain. Comments were coded as *feedback* when interviewees referenced dedicated and specific opportunities to receive, give, or integrate feedback that resulted from internal data. During the evaluation process, research and data reports were presented to different stakeholder groups, including the IOC leadership, school level CCRCs, community partners, and school staff. Discussions of these reports included a review of contextual factors influencing the work, challenges and barriers, promising practices, and recommendations for making change. School staff

and organizational partners were asked to consider what was working, and where the IOC could support the district in making changes. KS shared,

> It's not like all the administrators weren't good quality people before we started this project, including the teachers. A lot of the same teachers are still there. But as a result of the analysis of the data, I think it made people more aware that geez, we're really not doing the job we should be doing (KS, 557-560).

MB noted that the feedback received from qualitative and quantitative data, including student outcome data and staff interview comments were "low for what we thought we were doing…didn't match our perception…" (MB, 170-171).

In addition to feedback presented in reports, teachers and school leaders created opportunities to give one another feedback, including participating in learning walks and classroom observations of their peers. RD commented on these opportunities for teachers to give one another feedback, noting, "The teachers do a video of each other, of themselves and then they critique with another person they trust. That's huge" (RD, 543-544). AL had to opportunity to watch teachers work together and share feedback, noting, "…when their meeting is up, they come back and a lot of them have kind of stuck around and collaborated on how did things go and what would you do differently and so it's really a neat kind of buzz that's in the air when they're there" (AL, 282-284).

IOC leaders discussed how feedback opportunities were intentionally embedded into regular practice throughout the district. ER and MB shared that they considered the initial surveys given to staff and families in 2013 as an important piece of feedback. They remained open to using the survey findings in productive ways throughout the initial years of the initiative. One example of integrating feedback from the surveys was the

district leadership's response to learning that several staff were either neutral or negative when asked about collaborative decision making, particularly at the secondary level. Approximately 50% of high school staff and 68% of middle school staff responded with neutrality or in disagreement to a survey question asking about whether a clear and collaborative decision making process was used to select individuals for leadership roles in their buildings. ED and MB explored this feedback to the IOC, and the group identified ways to build opportunities for staff to work together regularly. This response to feedback ultimately led to the creation of the district CCRC.

ER also explained that he was impressed by his staff's willingness to engage in discussions around their own practice and performance. ER shared, "But you know, given our stats they were real professionals about it and when they saw- and the staff they knew it, they weren't being given a bunch of hocus pocus it was just obvious to them and it just caught on" (ER, 709-712). When asked about feedback on the needs assessment survey, school staff responses were mixed, with 92.5% of high school staff (n = 36) responding in agreement or strong agreement to the statement, *Administrators provide teachers with feedback that enables them to improve their practice,* while 50% of middle school staff (n = 28) were in agreement or strong agreement with the statement. Staff also noted that they did not often have the opportunity to receive or provide feedback to their peers. RD shared that as teams became more unified, however, "they started giving feedback…they started owning it…They're consistently getting feedback from their buildings, and that's when they meet and go, ok, this is what our survey says…what's working for folks, what are they needing…" (RD, 337-342).

Category E: The Cycle of Evaluation

The category *evaluation cycle* was coded 21 times within the *evaluation* domain, representing 11.6% of the items coded within this domain. Comments were coded as *evaluation cycle* when interviewees spoke directly about the process of revisiting aspects of the research and data over time. Many interviewees shared that the data they received and discussed led to actionable feedback opportunities. Using this feedback, stakeholders were able to implement new processes to meet the needs of their students. These new processes led to new data, which, after analyzed and discussed, encouraged new feedback. KS explained it as, "not just the collection of data to help you focus on areas of importance, but the ongoing review of data to make sure that you stay on track" (KS, 657-658). DB shared,

> So, I think it was a bridge that got built. Like a couple slats at a time. But eventually reached all the way across. And I'd say, right now, there are people that probably forget about it. Their practices are still not aligned. They forget about it. But the system brings it back up to them about every quarter. And it's not going to go away. It doesn't appear to be going away. (DB, 579-584)

This evaluation cycle continued throughout the years of evidence collected for this study. Examples could be seen in the revisions to CCRC goals and timelines, additional research projects requested after interpreting new data, and continued opportunities for professional development related to the identified needs of school and district level stakeholders. Additionally, DSA researchers visited all classrooms bi-annually from 2013 to 2017 to collect data using the STAR observation protocol. Results

from these observations were presented to school staff in the fall and spring of each academic year.

MB noted that one important aspect of this evaluation cycle was the ability to flex and change with the new data and feedback presented throughout the initiative. She shared, "…and we're not afraid to cut things in our work. Like if it isn't working and people don't want to do it, it's not getting what we wanted" (MB, 685-686). AL shared a similar perspective:

> I would say that it is always fluid and that we can adjust and make changes as the needs change because you know, that's going to be the case. And actually, every graduating class is a little bit different sometimes. So, I think just being really present with that and knowing that we can make adjustments as, you know, we learn and grow and kind of figure out what did and didn't work. (AL, 364-368)

The notion that the evaluation cycle provided opportunities for reflection and revision was consistent among interviewees, and was evident at multiple times throughout the initiative. When asked about the process of developing new goals, KS noted, "They will get together, and they will reassess all the things we've been doing…They will reassess that amongst themselves, and decide, are those things that we should continue?" (KS, 380-382). He went on to explain how this process was repeated multiple times throughout the IOC work. One example of this process was the collaboration's decision to shift their initial goal from having *60% of high school graduates earning a 4-year college degree* to having *60% of high school graduates completing some form of postsecondary education, including 2-year college, 4-year college, certificate programs, or apprenticeships.* The evaluation cycle was identified as

a valuable process in building the capacity of the IOC to implement large-scale changes. As RD pointed out, leaders continued to ask, “What do we keep looking at, what are other things we need to do…and how do we keep pushing this out?” (RD, 804-816).

Category F: Initiative Outcomes

The category *initiative outcomes* was coded 17 times within the *evaluation* domain, representing 9.4% of the items coded within this domain. Comments were coded as such when interviewees discussed their collaborative work in terms of the successes they saw in the data and throughout the community. Interviewees shared that celebrating their successes was an important aspect of keeping the IOC and district staff invested and motivated to work towards their common goals. In discussing the importance of focusing on outcomes, DB shared,

> So I do think ... without a vision, the people will perish kind of a thing, is kind of a true proverb. In this case, I think with a vision, they flourished. So in this case, it just happened to be in college and career readiness. (DB, 587-590)

Although the research questions for this study did not focus on outcome data, during interviews IOC members highlighted their successes, and noted that an important aspect of their work was sharing their successes with the community. In 2015, RD commented on what she considered important outcomes of the work so far, sharing, “It’s pretty cool. All students just signing up for the college bound scholarship in 7th and 8th grade. In 2013 less than half of eligible students signed up for the college bound scholarships” (RD, 630-631). By 2017, 73% of the eligible students were signed up for College Bound scholarships. She continued by explaining, “We're getting close; We've been getting awards. We're meeting our marks” (RD, 647).

Additional outcomes highlighted during interviews included a 10-percentage point increase in students enrolling directly into college between 2011 and 2016, and an increase of 18.5% in the number of students meeting NCAA transcript eligibility requirements for 4-year college attendance, from 32.2% in 2011 to 50.7% in 2016. School stakeholders also pointed to increases in standardized test scores, particularly at the high school level, which they attributed to an increased focus on instructional practice throughout the initiative (See Figure 6).

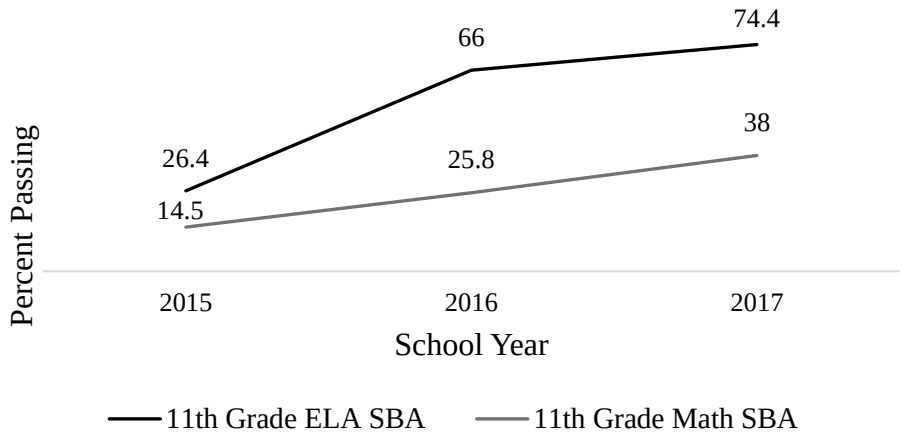

Figure 6. Percent of students passing the 11th grade standardized tests.

RC discussed outcomes from the perspective of Arlington College, sharing that college faculty were beginning to see evidence of the work done by the IOC, specifically related to students' engagement and preparation. He commented, "So it's kind of cool to see how, just the perception of 'I'm a leader on campus,' now I'm going to step up and do better with myself" (RC, 85-87). He also noted that he was excited to see students "wearing the swag" and "seeing themselves as college graduates" (RC, 660-661). RD shared how exciting it was to have "200 juniors and seniors visiting seven different college campuses and that's happened now for the last couple of years" (RD, 599-601).

Data retrieved from the community college revealed that the percentage of CSSD students enrolling in Arlington College increased from 25% in 2009 to 36% in 2017.

Throughout the initiative, IOC leaders made efforts to communicate outcomes to staff, community members, local organizations, and the media. One example was a November 2016 article written in *The Chronicle* in which program leaders were able to share initiative outcomes and provide context for their work. The article highlighted several data points, including graduation rates, college eligibility, summer programs to improve postsecondary enrollment, and community programs and involvement in the initiative. After publishing this article, neighboring districts and community organizations reached out to IOC leaders to engage in conversations about the initiative. KS shared:

> In some respects, if you were to talk with them they might say that we're kind of their poster child of what's possible. Yeah, we've presented to the round table earlier in the year because they were very interested in our journey. And what we've done, and where we're headed. Mainly because we're heading in the direction they would like all the school districts to be in, and they're recognizing we're still in the early stages of this, but there's a lot to be learned from what we've done, and what we're continuing to do. (KS, 578-587)

Domain 2: Community

The domain *community* was coded 209 times during the data analysis process, representing 31.5% of the coded text. For this study, community was defined as the network of people inside and outside of the school district that organized together to influence and impact this initiative. Items were coded as such when the interviewees spoke directly about group work, rather than focusing on individual behaviors as part of

the collaboration. The notion of *community* was also present in survey items and artifacts collected throughout the initiative. Within the *community* domain, 4 categories were identified, including A) acting as a catalyst, B) building capacity, C) strategic partnerships, and D) changing the culture of the community.

Category A: Acting as a Catalyst

Within the *community* domain, *acting as a catalyst* was coded 39 times, representing 18.6% of items assigned to this category. Interview comments were coded within *acting as a catalyst* if they focused on the collective motivation to act. Evidence from interviews revealed the perception that the community itself acted as a catalyst, or spark, for this comprehensive initiative to build. Interviewees spoke candidly about the need for action resulting from changes within their city. KS, foundation leader, identified Cold Spring as a "very, very committed city" with "a lot of community support to get involved," (KS, 207-2014), and AL shared her belief that there is a "uniqueness because it is a small community" (AL, 112) that helped to generate buy-in from so many diverse stakeholders.

KS acknowledged that prior to this initiative the Cold Spring Foundation had not collaborated with the school district. He shared that his brother, the Foundation president, "had an affinity for Cold Spring…and wanted to give kids an opportunity to have successes in life that he feels he had" (KS, 140-142). This was also the case for other foundation members that had matriculated through the district and were looking for an opportunity to give back their community. RD commented on some of the changes to the community:

> And then we really saw a change when we lost our mine and we had- we still just have the plant. And so that kind of changed things for us as far as on jobs, locally really good paying jobs and obviously other things have come into place, but that really changed things for us and we started seeing more and more of a transient population. (RD, 46-49)

Demographic data from the community confirmed the interviewees' perceptions of a changing community, with an increase in families requiring financial and social support, an increase in ethnic diversity, a loss of workforce opportunities, and low post-secondary persistence rates for students in the community. For example, Figure 8 displays the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch benefits over time. The percentage increased by approximately 10-percentage points over a ten year span, as reported by OSPI Report Card (www.http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/). Additionally, the percentage of non-white students increased from 13.4% in 2006 to 29.2% in 2016. RD shared that in Lewis County, as of 2016, less than 15% of adults held a bachelor's degree, and mining, logging and construction jobs accounted for less than 10% of all jobs available in the area.

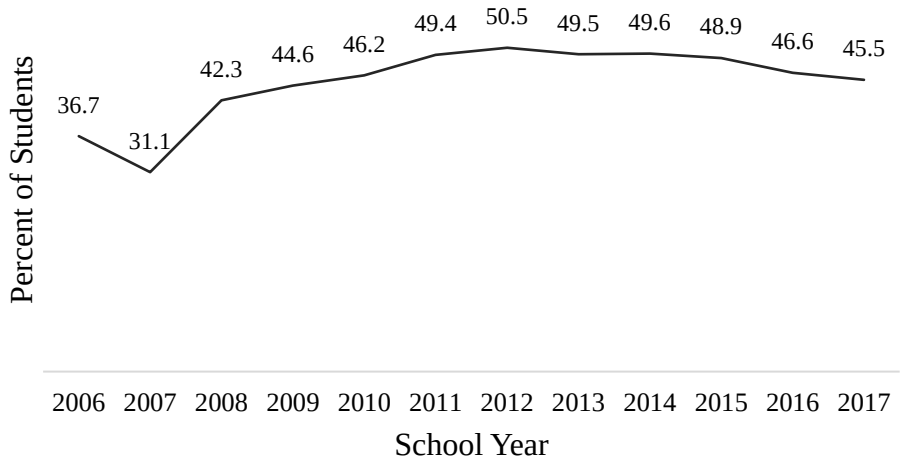

Figure 7. Percentage of students eligible for free/ reduced lunch benefits.

School leaders actively reached out to community members to begin a dialogue focused on how to support the long-term success of their community. When asked to talk about how this initiative was initially presented, DB, shared, “In this case, it was the discussion of, ‘Well how do we help more of our kids get successful?’ ” (DB, 429-432). He followed by noting, “And so we had a meeting. And they seemed not only willing to do it, but excited about it” (DB, 258-259). These leaders from the school district and community shared a desire to support students as part of a more comprehensive plan to strengthen and support their community. This sentiment was confirmed by the school district assistant superintendent, MB, who shared:

> Okay. And those two purposes worked really well together because what we want to do is bring economic development to our community, we want to bring people to our community, want families to be here, so we got quality school systems, good city and have an attractive place to live. (MB, 65-68)

RD followed up by noting, “So that was where okay you know, we're seeing we have a responsibility, if we have sixty percent of our kids that are saying they want to go to college… and we've got… like thirty percent or lower [going]” (RD, 421-423).
AL felt that once people were able to see this initiative as “helping the future of Cold Spring” (AL, 57), they were eager to participate. ER noted that after his initial meeting with The DSA Group, he remembered “sitting in this chair in the office hearing him say, ‘now you know this you have a moral imperative to do something about it’” (ER, 130-132).

Category B: Building Capacity

Within the *community* domain, *building capacity* was coded 30 times, representing 14.4% of the items coded within this category. Interview comments were coded to this category if they focused on the IOC work to create an internal framework to support, build, and sustain the initiative in the community over time. Interviewees shared their belief that in order for this process to be successful, stakeholder groups from each organization would need to intentionally integrate this work into their regular tasks and discussions.

Interviewees described several capacity building efforts, including communicating about the work, remaining transparent with all stakeholders, and inviting, rather than telling people to join the IOC and support the change process. Interviewees also discussed the importance of taking time to create awareness and understanding of the work by sharing the research and data, and encouraging discussions and reflection. As priorities changed and the initiative expanded, IOC leaders leaned on this platform of awareness and understanding to move the work forward. KS talked about the importance of "making an investment in support systems" so that eventually they could "in the long-term think policy wise" (KS, 673-675).

One key component of building capacity was the decision to hire a dedicated person to fill the position and lead the work at the school district level. Regarding this position, DB commented:

> So in Cold Spring's case, they had RD, who woke up every day knowing that she was thinking about the College and Career Readiness Committee. She was thinking about the College Advisors. And she was thinking about teachers

> reflecting on their own practices, every day. And she learned how to facilitate all of it. So for three years, building that capacity. And I think there would have been a ton of bumps in the road, had that person not been there. And I think a lot of things just would have been dropped if it was just on the Superintendent trying to lead it. (DB, 460-468)

DB also shared that they were intentionally building capacity to expand the initiative by having the IOC leadership identify strategic positions early in their process. He commented, "But I think by having the Assistant Superintendent in charge, sort of daily communications, was really helpful…They began building their own internal capacity right away" (DB, 454-459). KS also commented on the importance of building capacity at the leadership level to extend the initiative into the community:

> The Steering Committee still meets. They're still thinking about how they can build awareness. How they can align their classes. How they can make sure they're NCAA approved. But it's becoming a little more internalized… there's a momentum beyond anybody now, any one person. Because they got the College President. You've got the Vice-President for Student Support Services. You've got the Vice-President for Teaching and Learning for Academic Affairs. You've got the college professors now doing their own Learning Walks and visiting the high school. The college is preparing instructionally for the kids that are coming up. Not just academically, not just curriculum, not just program. But the college is preparing for these kids. (KS, 589-599)

Additionally, interviewees discussed capacity building in terms of the students, and helping them to understand what they were capable of and what was possible. DB

commented, “Back then, we actually talked about readiness to benefit, ready to benefit, a lot” (DB, 106-107). Although not directly related to building the IOC, it became evident that interviewees could not separate discussions of their own collaborative work from the goals and objectives they were working towards. Student success and the success of the collaboration became somewhat interdependent, and in order to build the capacity of the community, the students would need to realize their own potential.

Many of the conversations between IOC partners were focused on supporting families that may not have had an awareness of what it means to enroll in postsecondary education. One example of building capacity for students and their families was the district’s mission to have 100% of students signed up for College Bound scholarships prior to high school. These scholarships provide funding for eligible students to attend college, but students must have applied prior to high school. MB commented on the need to build capacity around this process:

> …somebody in our staff has to literally talk to that person who hasn't signed up so they've made a choice… Like you can choose not to sign up for that but it’s not because you didn't have the information [or] that we didn't know about it. We are definitely committed to that outreach, we just can't change the choice of that family. (MB, 340-347)

Another example of building internal capacity for students and families focused on creating college awareness from kindergarten through high school. During her interview, RD noted that she was surprised when the initial family surveys revealed that families did not feel they were getting their information from the school district. She commented, “We're the school and the percentages were quite low on information that

was coming from us and so that was the big heads up to us then, oh my goodness we've got to do a better job" (RD, 412-414).

As a result of these findings, IOC leaders identified questions that needed to be addressed to better understand how to prepare students for postsecondary success and meet the overall initiative goals. RD shared that they started to think about, "How do you even go about that, how do you know deadlines for colleges, how do you even get access to what college you should go to versus another college, how do you even know about what career opportunities are out there?" (RD, 393-396). In response, school leaders and IOC members implemented college sweatshirt days, announcements about where teachers attended college, and opportunities for students to visit college campuses as ways to build internal capacity for students.

Category C: Strategic Partnerships

Within the *community* domain, the category *strategic partnerships* was coded 101 times, representing 48.3% of the items coded within this category. Interview comments were coded to this category if they focused on the collective efficacy of the partnerships that comprised this collaborative initiative. Collective efficacy is defined as, "a group's shared belief in its conjoint capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment" (Bandura, 1997, p. 477). MB commented on the selection of partners:

> …so we had meetings with myself, superintendent ER, PC whose a consultant with us, DB from the DSA Group, the college, the Cold Spring foundation, the high school, our math coach…as part of this whole initiative and brought everybody together and asked for their input. (MB, 368-371)

There were several discussions regarding the ability of this IOC to build momentum towards their goals, communicate with one another, and share decision making. This ability to work together was predicated on the strategic selection of organizations invited to participate in the work. KS commented on this, noting, “It's true though. I think the effort has been so much more successful because it's been a Cold Spring Foundation/community effort” (KS, 715-716).

IOC leaders reached out to multiple organizations to partner in their work. These organizations were invited to join the collaboration for specific reasons, in many cases based on the research and data highlighted during the initial needs assessment. One example of a strategic partnership was the decision to reach out to local businesses to participate in the initiative’s mentor program. AL shared,

> Reaching out to them was a big component… their focus was, How can we make Cold Spring better as a community? And so reaching out to them, kind of helped the mentors recruit themselves a little bit. Oh, I'm already in on that so...yes, bring it on! I'll add it to my schedule. So that helped a lot. (AL, 485-487)

Similarly, RC perceived the collaboration between the school district and Arlington College to be a strategic decision based on the strong sense of community and trust already present between the organizations. He commented:

> I think we've had historically good relationships, I think with our school districts, you know, we're part of the community… second, third, fourth generation Arlington college graduates all around this community that are working for the community owned businesses, their kids that are coming through the system. So I was thinking it's just been kind of a positive relationship. (RC, 460-464)

RD also commented on the relationship between the college and the school district, noting, “We have persons on board that understand the value of the role the college plays in community. They're from various parts of our community and they’re very supportive of this kind of effort” (RC, 556-558). This awareness of the importance of selecting the organizations that would strengthen the IOC was a persistent theme identified in interview transcripts.

Within the category of strategic partnerships, two sub-categories were identified; trust and resource allocation. Organizational trust was referenced approximately 20 times in coded interviews. Interviewees discussed the need to establish trust in order to engage in challenging conversations and acknowledge different ideas and perspectives. At the start of this initiative, IOC leaders strategically selected organizational and community partners that they felt they could trust, or already did trust. They also worked to build trust with new IOC partners over time. MB described Cold Spring as a “very collaborative district” (MB, 128), and KS noted that from the start this was “a true partnership” (KS, 650). ER also implied that it took a tremendous amount of respect and trust to allow outside organizations to join in the leadership and decision making of the school district.

The second sub-category coded within *strategic partnerships* was *resource allocation.* This sub-category was identified based on comments made regarding efforts of the collaboration to distribute resources throughout all of the contributing organizations. KS shared, “…there are certain things that should be a part of every school district. For one, you've got great leadership at the top, administrators, school board, cooperation with the union. You can make great things happen” (KS, 529-531). In this

context, resources included funding, but also human capital. An example was the decision to have committees with representation from each school in the district, and each partner organization. KS commented:

> Honestly, just partly because everybody has bought into it you know? They understand we're providing a great gift in outside funding. It's each institution has stepped up in their own way to provide their own prioritization in funding and to be that kind of a partner in the effort. (KS, 375-382)

RD described this as a "simultaneous effort" to be sure that each of the IOC partners were contributing resources, experiencing the benefits, and remaining motivated towards their common goals.

Category D: Changing Culture

Within the *community* domain, the category *changing culture* was coded 39 times, representing 18.7% of the items coded within this category. Interview comments were coded to this category if they focused on the ability of the IOC to embrace and capitalize on the community's readiness to change. KS talked at length about the importance of changing the culture from "…what I call a cap and gown culture to a college success culture" (KS, 145-149). He shared, "…you have a culture that doesn't just look at high school graduation as your end game but really, truly it's looking at success after high school as the goal" (KS, 532-534). He also discussed his belief that the financial support from the Foundation allowed the district to take a step back and really explore where they would need to change to meet the needs of their students, and the community. DB shared, "We actually walked into a district where administrators were open to data. They were not being defensive. They were ready to go" (DB, 259-261). He continued, "…So, I think

that a community partnership takes the work deeper and beyond K-12, and can take it into the community" (DB, 387-388).

When asked about readiness to change at the school level, RD commented, "The conversation is change" (RD, 311). She followed up by stating, "We turned the language around. Careers matter as much as college… many of our occupations that make difference for families, give them a living wage and they're contributing in a meaningful way back to their community. We're giving them the future" (RD, 568-572). KS noted,

> I think that a couple things happened when some of the initial presentations from the DSA Group were very positive…I heard DB say on several occasions that he'd never seen a school district respond so rapidly…And the stories of the culture changing were pretty powerful. That truly showed the buy-in. (KS, 225-232)

Conversations around change were complex. Collaboration members expressed excitement and pride in their work to support change, but also acknowledged barriers to the change process. RC spoke about the need to alter the perceptions of who community college students were and what they were capable of, and RD noted that conversations around college could be met with skepticism from community members who had not gone to college, and did not see the value. DB shared his perspective on this, commenting, "But, I think for sure it changed the community. I mean, we know for sure that people are taking an awful lot of pride in Cold Spring School District" (DB, 632-636). ER spoke candidly about the resistance he saw at the district level. He commented:

> We enjoy a culture that was open to what we were trying to do…we talk about the culture. Every building we have has a different culture. And if-- and some of those ships don't turn as quite as easy as some of the other buildings. And we've

> experienced that. But we have found that as the buildings that have made that switch that it puts pressure on the others too to be part of the team. (ER, 787-791)

In addition to perceptions of changing the culture of the adults in the community and school district, there was also a sense that the IOC was working to change the beliefs students had about themselves. Based on descriptive data collected on college enrollment and persistence, the IOC hired a college counselor to work with all students on building efficacy and preparing to be career and college ready. This counselor provided dedicated support to work with students on being college and career aware, eligible, and prepared. The counselor used student data to determine individual needs, and during one meeting shared that she met with some students more than fifteen times during the year to support them in shifting their beliefs about themselves. When asked to give her perspective on changes at the student level, MB shared, “I'm going to just go with a growth mindset. Kids believing that they can learn. And from the youngest ages that's permeated the whole culture of the district” (MB, 442-445).

Domain 3: Human Factors

The domain *human factors* was coded 124 times during the coding process, representing 18.7% of the coded interview text. For this study, items were coded to *human factors* if they focused on the individual characteristics and behaviors of those involved in the collaboration. In contrast to items coded to the *community* domain, items coded as *human factors* were directed at how individuals within the organizations worked together and participated at an interpersonal level. Five categories were coded within *human factors*, including A) inclusion and voice, B) leadership, C) shared ownership, D) building relationships, and E) strategic selection.

Category A: Inclusion and Voice

Within the *human factors* domain, the category *inclusion and voice* was coded 14 times, representing 11.3% of the items within this category. Interview comments were coded to this category if interviewees discussed the importance of providing opportunities for individual stakeholders to have a voice in the decision making processes. This was identified by several IOC leaders as a strength of this initiative. RD discussed this, noting, "But that the district had approved this to happened; that they wanted to hear from us. So that was huge and they were reaching out on so many fronts" (RD, 97-99). DB commented on the fact that organizational leaders "allowed everybody to have a voice in the work" (DB, 313) which RD identified as "…very new, this was a huge change to be asking us what we thought so that was just mind boggling" (RD, 122-123). Similarly, AL shared, "Everybody wants to be heard, right? So, I think when people feel like they're being heard and they're part of the process, it's a lot easier to jump in" (AL, 411; 415).

Interviewees noted that this sense of inclusion was experienced at all levels within the IOC. Individuals within each organization were given the opportunity to take on leadership roles, provide input and expertise, and share their knowledge with collaboration partners. KS shared, "but I think one of the reasons why it was successful is that… everybody was on the same page" (KS, 192-193). Examples of this can be seen in the attendance patterns of steering committee meetings throughout the duration of the initiative. Although formal meeting minutes were not reliably kept, meeting notes reviewed for this study provided evidence of various attendees participating and sharing their expertise continuously throughout the initiative. As an example, data analysts from

the school district and college were invited to collaborate during discussions of the most effective way to track KPIs, and counselors were asked to present their findings after hosting a community event or career fair. Additionally, turnover of IOC members was low. In between 2013 and 2017, membership in the IOC remained consistent, with no members transitioning out, and new members rotating in to strategically support aspects of the initiative.

Another example of inclusion and voice could be seen in efforts to provide teachers with focused professional development to improve their instructional practices and reflect on their work. The decision to increase opportunities for focused professional development was based upon survey responses gathered at the beginning of the initiative. The IOC made an investment in teachers by creating opportunities for them to learn from one another. Teachers were also provided opportunities to take on leadership roles, which helped to increase buy-in. DB shared, “I think what happens is, trust really starts to develop, by knowing they were listened to, and by gaining a chance to actually lead the instructional work” (DB, 553-555).

During the 2013 survey administration, 35.7% of middle school staff disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, *Administrators consider various viewpoints and obtain a variety of perspectives when making decisions.* Additionally, when asked if a clear and collaborative decision making process was used to select individuals for leadership roles in the building, staff within each building disagreed or strongly disagreed. For example, 18.4% of high school staff survey participants responded disagree or strongly disagree, and 25% of middle school staff responded disagree/ strongly disagree. In response, IOC leaders worked to create processes which provided a

clearer path for those interested in assuming leadership roles. IOC Steering Committee meeting notes from 2014 highlighted discussions focused on developing a plan for creating teacher leadership opportunities to support the long-term outcomes of the IOC.

In addition to inclusion and voice for all adult stakeholders in the school community, student voice was discussed during interviews. Specifically, RD discussed the work being done at the high school to engage students in discussions around career and college readiness and provide them with opportunities to take on leadership roles within their community. She noted,

> The work that they've done at the high school is just phenomenal. And they're letting students lead. They're back to that whole voice and choice. It's like teachers found their voice and now students are finding their voice and now students are actually helping lead a lot of that CCR work. (RD, 732-734)

Another example of student voice was shared by RC, who discussed plans for the community college mentor program. He described having graduates from CSSD who had persisted into their second year of college at Arlington College mentor incoming students from CSSD. These mentors were asked to share their experiences with incoming students to provide guidance as they navigated their first quarter in college.

Category B: Leadership

Within the *human factors* domain, the category *leadership* was coded 41 times, representing 33.1% of the items coded within this category. Interview comments were coded to the *leadership* category if they referenced the individual efforts and characteristics that interviewees perceived in the IOC leadership. While six of the interviewees were organizational leaders themselves, their comments were often directed

at a peer when discussing the type of leader they felt was beneficial to the IOC. Throughout the coding for this category, the concept of humility in leadership was discussed, as was the concept of distributed leadership. KS made several comments regarding the leaders of the school district, noting that there would have been no comprehensive initiative without them:

> The reception was actually positive, which is partly what's made this project so successful because it really takes great leadership to make it happen. If you don't have that you never even get out of the gate. And even before we hired the DSA Group, OS and I spoke with a number of people, higher education who have expertise in K through 12 to try to glean what they thought were important factors that ... Obviously the most important was great leadership. (KS, 74-82)

DB shared his belief that the initiative was "led by really humble people. Meaning, basically people that just didn't need to get the glory. They just wanted to do a good job, and they were open to feedback" (DB, 655-656). KS identified MB and ER as "the two key players," while ER commented on the value of the Arlington College president being "open to a lot of conversations" and RC noted the value of "having a president that's willing to try new different things and try to support the K12 to college transition…It's very helpful…" (RC, 211-213).

RD shared her perspective on how school principals at all grade levels demonstrated an "understanding of the importance of getting all of the students to go to college." She also commented, "I would say, probably the biggest thing that has made this work is that it hasn't been top down. It's really been a train the trainer model…having administrator support by giving [the teachers] the time that they need" (RD, 539-541).

Interviewees shared that the IOC leaders helped to create a safe place for people to share ideas and build relationships. In addition, interviewees noted that IOC and community leaders were consistently engaged and present throughout the initiative. Leadership from each organizational partner made the sustained commitment of participating in regular steering committee meetings. During the 2016 interview, MB shared:

> I still facilitate the meetings between the vice president of teaching and learning and the high school principals because I want them to meet monthly. So that they're talking about things. And if they say, 'Oh, we don't have any agenda.' I say, 'Oh come on, let's just meet anyway.' And we come and meet and then they're like, 'Oh yeah, they talk about this, that and the other-- we need to do these things'. (MB, 665-668)

Category C: Shared Ownership

Within the *human factors* domain, the category *shared ownership* was coded 22 times, representing 17.7% of the items coded within this category. Interview comments were coded to the *shared ownership* category if they referenced the individuals who began to take ownership of the change process throughout the initiative. While there was consensus from interviewees that the IOC leadership was immediately invested in the initiative, interviewees also acknowledged that they made a dedicated effort to develop the same sense of investment and ownership throughout the community. DB shared his belief that "...they want everybody to own this thing. They want, when parents come and register their kids for Kindergarten, the Kindergarten teachers talk to the parents about college readiness" (DB, 621-627). MB commented:

> So if you're asking me what I think is imperative, I think that the leadership, the board and the school district, the trustees, the president of the college, the faculty, they feel like that they're directing the work and we're supporting it. We're supporting their work. (MD, 657-659)

MB's comment was supported by AL's perspective. She shared:

> So you really have to make it your own and I think that's why that collaborative effort was so key because people felt like it was our own. Like this is what is going to work for us. Because we have our own community, we have our own needs, and we have our own challenges that are going to be different from even Arlington. --who's right down the road. So it has to work for our students. (AL, 540-548)

RD also discussed the teachers' ownership of the initiative, commenting, "So then they started owning it, customizing for each of their buildings which just kept building ownership and buy in" (RD, 337-340).

These comments supported the IOC leadership's collective perspective that including people in decision making was important in creating shared ownership for the initiative. The IOC leaders also talked about the need for everyone to have some "skin in the game" (KS, 180). KS talked at length about the importance of having community members support the initiative by contributing resources. One of his goals was to increase the likelihood that these community members would invest in the initiative for the long-term. An example of this could be seen in the Foundation's challenge to the community to raise a portion of the funds needed to continue the initiative into 2020. Foundation

leaders offered to donate $1,000,000 if the community would contribute the remaining $500,000. In response, the community raised over $700,000.

Another example of creating shared ownership was the decision to have the school district and Arlington College share a counselor position to help bridge the gaps between high school and college. District leaders discussed this decision as a shift in thinking about their students; instead of "owning them until graduation", ER and MB discussed how they began to see them as members of the community, who they would take responsibility for into adulthood. ER talked about this during his interview, noting, "to be able to…to take a kid's passion and fit it into a career…But somebody needs to talk to them on their journey and direct it towards a career" (ER, 851-856). RC also commented on the shared responsibility for students, discussing the option of having college representatives travel to the high school to have seniors register for their classes in the Spring of their senior year.

Category D: Building Relationships

Within the *human factors* domain, the category *building relationships* was coded 28 times, representing 22.6% of the items coded within this category. Interview comments were coded to the *building relationships* category if they focused on the internal relationships built and maintained between individuals within the organizations comprising the IOC. At each operating level, teachers to teachers, organizational leader to leader, students to teachers, students to college support personnel, and college leaders to district leaders, stakeholders build relationships with one another that increased the potency of the collaborative work. There were numerous opportunities for building relationships embedded into this initiative. These included monthly building level

meetings, district level meetings, executive steering committee meetings, community events, and dedicated time for collaboration during the work day.

Anecdotal notes and informal conversations throughout the duration of the initiative revealed that IOC, school and community members began to initiate opportunities to meet and talk about the initiative. DB and KS met multiple times to discuss initiative progress, ER met with the community college president to share ideas, school counselors took field trips to the college to meet with college support staff, and school administrators met regularly with their teacher leaders to build connections. Additionally, opportunities for students to build stronger relationships were also highlighted as a key piece of this collaborative effort. The decision to develop and implement the community mentor program was predicated on the idea that students needed strong, trusting relationships with an individual outside of their immediate network to help support them and guide them towards their postsecondary goals. ER articulated the importance of relationships to his work within the IOC. When asked what he felt were key words that described the collaboration, he shared:

> For me? Okay. It's best work I've ever done… But I think the key words and I don't know if they describe the work I've done, but relationships. And if I could describe what relationships mean, I mean with the college, with the Cold Spring Foundation, with the donors, with the teachers or the administrators, with parents, with the community. I mean the relationships are huge. (ER, 865-869)

AL focused on the importance of building relationships with the students, who she felt were at the center of this initiative. She discussed the vision of the community mentor program, which she designed to help build connections that would support students in

their senior year of high school through their transition to a postsecondary option. She shared:

> And but more than that, I think beyond it is really that they feel a connection somehow with that person. They know how this network of, maybe one person only, but they have a network now of somebody beyond their parents or their teachers, who cares about them, and that really wants to see them succeed, and that they can reach out to, hopefully. (AL, 369-373)

RD shared her perspective on how teachers engaged in relationship building across the district, and how this impacted the initiative and ultimately, the students. She acknowledged that historically it was a challenge to move teachers from their individual classrooms into a collaborative space, but noted that this initiative "…really built trust and got people excited about their practice…[provided] the time to meet their colleagues and really critique powerful teaching and learning" (RD, 548-553). Finally, RC spoke about relationship building in terms of connections between the school district and the college:

> So we do it through our counseling relationships with our high schools, we do it in our recruitment. We do have a presence in the schools, but it's when we get invited to the table and watch what they're doing... You know I'm going to engage and really get to meet in those students. (RC, 890-893)

He continued by identifying these relationships as "low cost" ways to support students into postsecondary success. He also noted that the relationships between IOC partners was creating a "whole paradigm shift in terms of how you support students" (RC, 525-

527) which he suspected would have a cumulative effect on college enrollment and persistence over time.

Category E: Strategic Selection

Within the *human factors* domain, *strategic selection* was coded 19 times, representing 15.3% of the items coded within this category. Strategic selection was defined as the purposeful identification of individuals chosen to participate in aspects of the IOC initiative. Several interview comments directly referenced choosing specific individuals based on their connections, strengths, and interests. DB shared, “there were people in three key positions: the Assistant Superintendent, who had authority to delegate. A person to work as a liaison with the work group research arm, and the college advisors…Most of it actually worked really well” (DB, 473-478).

The district leadership, KS, and DB all directly discussed the decision to place RD in a role to lead the initiative from within. KS noted that she “was highly regarded” (KS, 177) and MB shared that it was important that it “wasn't just added to somebody else's plate, because there was a point person responsible…” (MB, 207-209). MB also shared:

> So we put a very skilled person in that role of leading this work and facilitating and making sure this happened in our district. Without that we wouldn't have seen the success that we got. I believe that having RD in that role helped immensely. (MB, 213-216)

KS spoke about the decision to retain The DSA Group based on the reputation of DB and community connections, and DB discussed the importance of the collaborative decision to choose specific people to work directly with students and to lead K-12 college and

career readiness committees. RD shared a similar belief in the importance of strategically selecting staff to take on early leadership roles in the initiative:

> Again there was so much choice it was mind blowing and it was just fun. So you kind of got those first folks that are going for it and they're visiting the different schools, are excited and they're talking and [we] start already seeing, 'well they're a natural fit to be on this committee.' So [we] approached them and said, 'you know they saw you participate in this, your excited, we'd love to have you be a part of this…' Most people felt like oh my gosh yes, this is exciting, I want to learn more. (RD, 267-274)

Domain 4: Process Factors

The domain *process factors* was coded 150 times during the modified CQR process, representing 22.6% of the coded interview text. For this study, process factors were defined as the actions and factors necessary to support the creation and efforts of the IOC. Within this domain, there were five categories identified, including: A) intentionality, B) prioritization, C) ramped approach, D) shared focus, and E) long-term. Interview comments and document review revealed patterns in the processes that the IOC engaged in throughout the initiative. While there was evidence of flexibility in decision making, there was also evidence of a structured, scaffolded foundation for the work being done.

Category A: Intentionality

The category *intentionality* was coded 13 times within the *process factors* domain, representing 8.7% of the items coded within this domain. AL, DB, MB, and RD each used the words "purposeful" and "intentional" in their discussions of the

collaborative work being undertaken. RC spoke about the targeted and directed efforts from the college to establish relationships throughout the community and the K-12 system in order to support students into their postsecondary progression. RD commented on the decisions made within school buildings to align their processes with student needs in a way that felt targeted and specific. This perspective of intentionality and purpose appeared strongly connected to the IOC's reliance on data driven decision making. Once collaboration leaders were presented the information, they developed an intentional process of deciding what to do and how to do it. DB cited the use of "specific action plans" (DB, 309) during meetings to determine where and how to focus their work.

One example of intentionality in process was explained by RD. She noted that collaboration leaders decided to hire a Director of Teaching and Learning whose focus would be on the importance of quality instruction for all students in order to help the IOC continue working towards the ultimate goal of postsecondary success. She shared that the person in this position could "ask the questions and make the adjustments so we know we're doing the right things for kids…getting those habits in place" (RD, 829-834).
A review of meeting notes and documents gathered during the initiative supported this notion of intentionality. During CCRC meetings, agendas were created to keep stakeholders on task and progressing in a cohesive, purposeful direction. Meetings began with presentations of research and data, and participants were asked to engage in discussions connecting the research to their practice.

Category B: Prioritization

The category *prioritization* was coded 73 times within the *process factors* domain, representing 48.7% of the items coded within this domain. Interview comments

were coded to the *prioritization* category when they focused on how IOC members made ordered decisions to act based on the data they had collected and the needs and responses of people in the community. Within this category, the sub-category of *resource allocation* was also identified.

Several interview comments were directed at the importance of prioritizing the initiative itself. DB shared, "… it just requires somebody or some people, always paying attention to it" (DB, 451-452). KS talked about the importance of prioritizing this initiative within the larger community context. He noted:

> You might have huge impact, so I think things that I would encourage a district to model on Cold Spring school district, exactly what they did to get the ball rolling. I think if we can provide evidence that these things work, then ultimately the state will recognize that some of the things that we're funding privately should be funded publicly. I think that's a hope yeah. Is that why shouldn't every school district truly have a dedicated college prep advisor who is gonna help kids not only get into college and be prepared, be successful in college. If 70% of the jobs in the future require postsecondary credentials, districts should be doing everything possible to make that happen. (KS, 536-545)

In addition to the importance of prioritizing the initiative within the context of the IOC, interviewees discussed the value of prioritizing targeted aspects of the initiative at strategic times throughout the process. During a visit to the school district in 2017, DB shared a memory of the efforts made by the collaboration to prioritize the needs of students. In 2013, students struggling academically at the high school were being pulled into a daily advisory class for additional support, while on track students were given free

time to complete homework or socialize with peers. This created feelings of resentment, and struggling students became more resistant, perceiving the time as punitive.

The school administrators decided to ask students to participate in a focus group, where they asked questions about the advisory time. DB noted that these conversations led to a change in school policy, which helped the IOC to prioritize the needs of all students and implement an inclusive advisory time using a career and college curriculum to guide the work. DB's story provided one example of the prioritization of student needs over keeping an ineffective policy in place.

KS presented another example of efforts to prioritize the needs of key stakeholders in order to keep the IOC's efforts outcome focused. After reviewing reports on postsecondary success and meeting with members of The Washington Roundtable and The Washington Business Council, KS developed a sense of urgency around providing comprehensive support for students rather than focusing solely on academics. He noted, "So it's not just great academics, but it's addressing the support system issues that are really complicated…." (KS, 547-549). In response, the IOC worked with the school counselors and community college support staff to identify ways to address these issues. As a result, a part-time high school counselor was hired to work throughout the summer, and a full-time counselor position was created and funded in a joint effort between the school district and Arlington College.

In another example of prioritization, RD discussed the IOC's decision to shift their focus to address the needs of the middle and high schools in the district:

> We're focusing on the secondary schools because of all the different departments, they're a bigger ship and so they're needing a little bit of extra support to keep

> pushing them forward because they're- we're over the hump, you know we're over fifty percent, we're pushing towards sixty and so now how do we aim higher. (RD, 326-329)

Similarly, RC spoke from the college perspective, sharing that the resources provided by the IOC were critical in advancing programs that often have to take a back burner to more pressing issues. He noted, “it's really hard in some student services programs to be able to focus, and focus resources toward building programs that help support student engagement outside of the classroom” (RC, 51-53). He cited prioritizing postsecondary connections as an impactful process factor in expanding the initiative.

Sub-category: Resource allocation. The sub-category *resource allocation* was coded when interview comments focused on the process the IOC used to manage the resources available to them throughout the initiative. MB noted it was about “the little pieces, the funding to do this…the foundation said, ‘What do you need? We will fund that’ ” (MB, 624-628). Resources, whether fiscal or human, were dispersed based on collaborative discussions, most often made at the steering committee meetings. As identified in the *evaluation* domain, IOC leadership prioritized their decisions on data and research. KS commented on this process:

> So basically covered our initial plan through 2020, and everybody currently is happy with the things we're funding. We started talking earlier in the year about, is there anything that we're missing? And the school district along with the college got together and came up with some priorities that they thought were one, things we should do right now. Tier one if we get more money, tier two if we get more on top of that. (KS, 392-396)

Once an area of need was identified, IOC leaders worked together to identify where resources would come from and how they would be allocated. Examples of this included decisions to hire new staff, purchase updated technology, and expand the reach of the initiative to the community and the college. When asked about what it was like to collaborate around resource allocation, KS shared:

> If you just have an outside party that just funds and does all the work and nobody's accountable then you'll never have long-term success. And I would say that with Cold Spring school district, has really ... It's almost like they redid their own strategic plan to focus on this, and that's why they've been able to proceed. I mean, school districts only have so much flexibility, so I think they've really done all they can, because they've tried to reallocate resources so that they can add funding to the things that we deem are important. Because the more they do that, the more things we can do. (KS, 341-349)

He also noted that "…each institution has stepped up in their own way to provide their own prioritization in funding to be kind of a partner in the effort" (KS, 228-339). ER spoke directly to this as well, sharing his experience: "We have flexibility with these funds. If we can show the research and show them how we're going to measure it and what we're going to get from it we can get the thumbs up" (ER, 728-730).

RD and AL spoke about the allocation of resources at the micro level, noting the process of effecting change was more possible because of the resources, as well as the decision making around those resources. AL talked about "the flexibility to try to reach out in different ways" (AL, 532-533) which, "really makes the difference when you can access new resources, right" (AL, 535-536), and RD explained the value of the human

resources allocated to this initiative: “And you see the ongoing investment in our students at this time through the Foundation and through some specific individuals who are alumni who are teaming with them” (RD, 464-466). ER felt that the decision to prioritize funding the modernization of technology was a critical allocation of resources that was fundamental to this initiative as it validated his teachers’ concerns and helped get buy in early in the process.

Category C: Ramped Approach

The category *ramped approach* was coded 12 times within *process factors*, representing 8% of the items coded within this domain. Interview comments were coded to the *ramped approach* category when they focused on the progressive accumulation of investment and effort in the initiative. Interviewees referenced “starting slow” (ER, 745) and “starting off small” (DB, 143). One of the words ER used to describe the work was simple. He shared, “I'm going to use the word simple because when we started the instructional thing as a great example, we didn't add more work for the teachers. We just gave them the power to do what they already do better…” (ER, 746-748).

Interviewees discussed taking the time to focus on a few fundamental areas and then broadening the scope of work once the framework was solid. Within this IOC, leaders chose to focus first on improving instruction, then modernizing their technology, and finally, preparing students for postsecondary success. ER noted that it could be “anything to get yourself going” (ER, 748), however, this IOC was thoughtful and considered this ramped approach while creating their initial goals to support sustainability over time.

In addition to goal setting, collaboration leaders considered a ramped approach to including stakeholders in the initiative, first asking for volunteers, then strategically selecting participants based on their investment, excitement, and willingness to embrace change. DB shared that the intention was to train a leadership team during year 1, invite volunteers to join building level teams during year 2, and finally have the entire community on board by year 3. At the same time, organizational leaders from the foundation, the college, and The DSA Group continued to ramp up their efforts. The foundation continued to generate community interest and support, and reached out to organizations interested in similar outcomes. The college began to adjust their student support processes and use data to identify areas of need, and The DSA Group continued to expand upon the data and research influencing the decision making. As RC explained, "So the initiative started really looking at, from my understanding, more the support in the community and then it sort of spun off into educational focus and completion and then focused on four year completion" (RC, 41-43). He continued by sharing his perspective that the collaboration would eventually "scale up a lot once we think it can just feed itself" (RC, 541).

Category D: Shared Focus

The category *shared focus* was coded 32 times within *process factors*, representing 21.3% of the items coded within this domain. Interview comments were coded to the *shared focus* category when interviewees commented on the collaborative vision and goal setting that guided this initiative. When asked to provide a few words that described his overall experience with this collaboration, ER shared, "That's the bottom

line. Focus. And I say focus because we are focused on this initiative. We don't stray from that…" (ER, 878-879).

IOC leaders spoke about the importance of identifying the goals of the initiative, and using those goals to guide conversations and decision making. During the interview with RD she noted, "Oh for sure. It's an initiative with three very clear goals. You'll see everywhere. In fact, our goals, if you look up on the wall that are improve, modernize and prepare, so there you go" (RD, 224-230).

These three goals were embedded into multiple aspects of the initiative, including marketing and public relations documents, meeting agendas, evaluation reports, and district-wide professional development opportunities. DB commented on the value of goal setting in developing the framework for the initiative:

> Yeah, it goes back to the goal. A District needs to have a goal for, why are you having kids go to you for 13 years, or even more. So, why would they go there? What's your vision, and what are your outcomes, and what do you want to happen? And so, I think if a District has that, it can organize around it. And if they're willing to set quantitative goals that they can track, and have action plans around it. (DB, 363-367)

In addition, AL shared, "I think it's really just being open and seeing what the ultimate goal is…if everybody can kind of arrive at the same goal and understand that there's pieces to that, that need to come together for it to happen...." (AL, 515-518). A shared focus was also evident in the language and actions collaboration leaders and stakeholders demonstrated throughout the initiative. MB commented that openness and engagement at all organizational levels was critical to the success of the initiative:

> So the college is open to doing this work. And the school district is open to doing this. And the college is open at all levels from the trustees to the president, to the vice president, to the instructors – oh, the deans and their instructors. The college is open and wants to do this work and is interested in this work. The school district is open and wants to do this work from your executive level to your building principals to your classroom teachers to actually parents and your students in your community. So we all – we have a mutual goal. That's imperative, right? (MB, 605-610)

She continued by noting, "…we want what's best for kids, right... And so we're trying to figure out how to work together to make this happen" (MB, 620-624). RC's perspective confirmed this, adding, "And we want to let them know that they are college material. We'll meet you wherever you are… So that's our goal" (RC, 111-113).

Category E: Long-term

The category *long-term* was coded 32 times within *process factors*, representing 13.3% of the items coded within this domain. Interview comments were coded to the *long-term* category when interviewees discussed the need for this initiative to happen over time. Comments that focused on the timeline and sustainability of the initiative were coded to this category, while comments that focused on the progressive intensity of initiative factors were coded to *ramped approach*. While discussing the scope of work and goals, KS explained that "this doesn't happen overnight…there's a lot to be learned" (KS, 505). RD acknowledged that one of the reasons she was so quick to engage in the initiative was the transparency around the scope of work, noting that the idea of working towards success in the future was compelling, and motivating.

Interviewees shared the perspective that this initiative would need to develop over time. Much of the data being collected would not reveal outcomes for several years after the initiative components were implemented. For example, IOC leaders chose to improve instruction as their foundational goal, knowing that the impact of these changes would be revealed over time. KS also pointed out that one of the metrics the IOC was tracking was College Bound scholarship application sign-ups. The outcomes of that process would not be known until middle school students were ready to enroll in college. Additionally, IOC leaders and stakeholders shared their understanding of the shift from caring for their students until high school graduation to caring for their students as they matriculated from the school district into their chosen postsecondary path.

To account for the long-term outcomes being tracked, the collaboration raised a second round of funding to continue their work through 2020, making it a seven year initiative with a plan to "reevaluate how we were doing in 2020" (KS, 260). And while interviewees expressed excitement about the current opportunities, they also regularly discussed their intentions to keep looking towards the future for their students and community. As an example, during one steering committee meeting leaders discussed the importance of developing a superintendent succession plan to ensure the shared focus would persist into the future. Simply stated, KS shared that the ultimate goal was for this to be "a sustainable program" (KS, 679), and RD noted that IOC often focused their conversations on "so what's next?" (RD, 530).

Summary of Data Collection

This chapter explored the qualitative perspectives of the interorganizational partners involved in the CSSD initiative. The themes that emerged reflected

commonalities in experience, and highlighted several factors that contributed to the process of developing and maintaining an IOC with a focus on educational outcomes and community development. Interviewees were asked to speak candidly about their participation in this initiative, and each perspective added to the rich narrative. When asked if other communities could recreate this process, ER implied that the formula required more than tangible resources:

> That's a good question because that's where I lose other superintendents. They think I'm really lucky and they can't do what we're doing because they don't have the donors and they don't have the foundation. And you probably can't do it as fast. But some districts can't do this fast anyway because of their culture. (ER, 735-738)

ER continued by saying, “You know, if we were beamed up out of this district and were dropped in another district somewhere, we would still have to do this” (ER, 739-741).

In the next chapter, I will present and discuss conclusions of the findings as they relate to the research questions. Additionally, I will present limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and a final reflection.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to explore the development and maintenance of an interorganizational collaboration (IOC) formed to support one community in Washington State. Participants for this study were purposefully selected based on their participation and roles in this initiative. Seven organizational leaders and members were interviewed as part of an on-going evaluation process, which began in 2013, and is currently funded through 2020. Secondary data collected between 2013 and 2017 was used in the analysis of this study. Interviews (n = 7) were transcribed and analyzed using the modified CQR method, and documents, anecdotal conversation notes, survey results, existing demographic and descriptive data, and research reports were reviewed to triangulate findings and provide a comprehensive narrative. An exploratory case study design was appropriate for this research as the primary research questions focused on uncovering *how* and *what*, which Yin (2009) noted were questions best suited for qualitative methodology. The two research questions guiding this study were:

> Research Question 1: How was this interorganizational collaboration developed, nurtured, and maintained?
>
> Research Question 2: What does this interorganizational collaboration mean to the stakeholders involved?

These research questions were based upon the belief that a group or organization may have complex needs that would be best supported through a multidisciplinary approach. How these organizations work together significantly impacts the outcomes of that work.

In the case of the CSSD, school leaders did not initially intend to engage in a comprehensive community initiative. The school superintendent, ER, acknowledged that he first sought funding for new technology to improve the school district's internal operations. Once he connected with outside organizations, however, what began as a request for money became a comprehensive look at the school district, and the community of people the school district serves. The IOC that formed between these multidisciplinary organizations was the focus of this study.

IOC is used in health care and business to provide comprehensive, affordable, and efficient products and processes for consumers (Zaff et al., 2015), yet public education has been less likely to access these relationships in a truly collaborative way. There are several examples of schools partnering with social service or community organizations in an effort to improve a specific outcome for their students (Paletta, Candal, & Vidoni, 2009; Legler & Reischl, 2003; Siegel, 2008), but the research on the development and processes of IOCs in education is less prevalent. Studies that do exist focus primarily on the outcomes of the partnership (Frahm, 2016; Swanson et al., 2016). During the research for this study, I began to understand that the IOC and the goals were not mutually exclusive; the process of building an IOC was directly related to the ability to remain focused on the proposed outcomes.

This study explored one small community in Washington State that participated in a comprehensive effort to create change through collaboration with the school district, incorporating the academic and social needs of their students and families with the economic and social needs of the surrounding community. Through the analysis of interview transcripts, document review, and descriptive and demographic data four

domains and 20 associated categories emerged. In summary, these four domains were: 1) Evaluation, which emphasized the importance of using research and data to help drive decision making, and engaging in a continuous, cyclical process of reflection and feedback; 2) Community, which reflected the importance of the IOC as its own entity creating opportunity for connections to be established, building capacity within each of the organizations, and understanding how the partnerships and relationships could impact a system of interrelated groups; 3) Human factors, which emphasized understanding the individual traits and efforts of the people involved in the IOC, and how these individuals had a significant impact on the IOC, and ultimately on the community; and 4) Process factors, which included an emphasis on intentionality of efforts, from engaging in a ramped approach, allocating resources, setting and working towards collaborative goals, and prioritizing efforts throughout the initiative.

These domains and categories will be further analyzed in this chapter as they relate to the two research questions and provide insight into the development of the IOC and the importance of this collaboration to the community. Conclusions based upon the emerging themes will be presented. This discussion is followed by this researcher's analysis of study limitations, recommendations for future research, and final reflections.

Impacts of the evaluation process on the IOC. The data analyses provided understanding to address the research questions for this study: 1) How was this IOC developed, nurtured, and maintained?, and 2) What did this IOC mean to the community. For this IOC, research, data, and feedback were perceived as critical to building and sustaining the collaboration. Interviewees spoke to the importance of understanding the needs of their individual organizations, connecting those needs to the existing research,

and using that research to help inform processes and procedures to guide the IOC's work. Meeting minutes highlighted a focus on using research and data, and yearly school plans incorporated data into each goal. The school district superintendent, ER, commented on his steadfast reliance on research and data to make decisions, and interviewees acknowledged that the evaluation cycle was important in maintaining their focus and developing a common language. At each stage of the initiative, collaboration leaders referenced the use of research and data to plan their next steps.

Empirical literature on IOC in business and healthcare included evidence that common goals and objectives are key components of working collaboratively (Casey, 2008; Cooper & Shumate, 2012; Palinkas et al., 2014). For this initiative, interviewees expressed their belief that collecting data, talking about data, and planning with data helped them to create goals that met the needs of each organization involved, and the community overall. For example, an important aspect of this initiative was linking school level outcomes to community outcomes. By setting goals for postsecondary success, the school district recognized the value of improving instruction for their students, community organizations and families saw value in improving the economic status of the community, and the college acknowledged the benefits of increasing student attendance, which would allow them to continue to expand their offerings and better serve their community.

As the primary evaluator on this initiative, I was able to have conversations about stakeholder perceptions of the evaluation process. Initial skepticism was replaced with genuine appreciation for the opportunity to be part of meaningful work guided by the needs of the community. IOC members were impressive in their commitment to

referencing research and reflecting on their processes. During steering committee meetings IOC leaders were actively engaged in dialogue, often scheduling separate meetings to extend their discussions. On several occasions, I received e-mails from collaboration leaders containing links to relevant research, papers, and articles, often with a request to review the research and schedule an informal meeting to chat.

In addition to consistent and frequent communication between collaboration stakeholders, qualitative evidence supported the need for collaborative reflection to help build a working IOC. Several IOC leaders acknowledged that when they engaged in the process of talking about what they had done and how it had gone they were more likely to make adjustments based on those discussions. This reflective process has been identified as an integral part of collaborative work (Amey et al., 2007), and appeared to play a key role in the work of this IOC.

The IOC became part of the community system. Although the initial goal of the school district was to modernize their own technology, district leadership was immediately open to conversations with the community foundation regarding a more comprehensive approach to support. These conversations started a relationship that has developed and grown over the years, and has expanded the reach and influence of the IOC. KS acknowledged that the Foundation did not really know anything about the school district when they were first approached, but they had a commitment to increasing opportunities and supporting economic stability in the region. This sense of ownership and pride for their community was influential in the sustained efforts of the IOC, and became inextricably connected to the decision making that occurred throughout the years.

Evidence of the influence of the IOC was prevalent in the schools, but also throughout the community. During interviews, organizational leaders spoke about their efforts to build capacity and support the change process. KS discussed his belief that community members needed some "skin in the game" to help increase buy-in, and community members responded by raising over $700,000 to continue funding the efforts of the IOC. Additionally, more than 20 community members agreed to make an 18-month commitment to act as mentors for seniors to support their transition between high school and their postsecondary option. Educational and business leaders in neighboring communities reached out to the IOC to better understand their work, and explore how they could replicate the initiative within their own communities. Meetings with The Washington Roundtable, The Washington Business Council, and STEM Washington helped to expand the influence of the IOC, and created more opportunities to build capacity.

An interesting shift in thinking occurred at the onset of this initiative, with school district members extending their reach outside of the K-12 parameters defined by a typical public school system. ER and MB talked at length, and often, about the commitment to support their students into adulthood. Their willingness to shift the paradigm from high school graduation to a college going culture had a significant impact on the IOC, helping to build connections with outside organizations in a mutually engaged way. District leaders acknowledged that initial financial support might have yielded immediate results, but would likely not have had the same comprehensive impact of the *K-12 and Beyond Student Achievement Initiative* that resulted from forming the IOC and building those mutual relationships.

Individual behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs impacted the overall IOC. As confirmed in empirical studies from the business and healthcare communities, the formation of an IOC requires attention to the external environment as well as attention to the IOC's internal context, or member attitudes and behaviors (Palinkas et al., 2014). In the case of the CSSD initiative, the individuals that participated in the IOC were seen as a critical component to making this a sustainable, functional collaboration. One example was the selection of The DSA Group, which was chosen based on an informal connection with a community member, but was nurtured and maintained through the intentional building of relationships, and ultimately trust, with IOC partners. Another important aspect of the IOC was choosing a leader from within the school district to champion the work. Every interviewee noted the importance of having RD at the center of the IOC's work. Additionally, RD suggested that the strategic invitation for volunteer teacher leaders to head CCRCs had a significant impact on the ability of the IOC to build capacity and support change within the community.

The IOC was led with intentionality and flexibility at every step of the process. Researchers in business and healthcare fields have found that leadership behaviors mattered to the formation and sustainability of a successful IOC. (Casey, 2008; Sanders, 2014) Alexander et al. (2001) noted that collaboration leaders must "recognize the need for appropriate balance between power sharing and control, between process and results, between continuity and change and between interpersonal trust and formalized procedures" (p. 175). Analysis of comments from IOC members confirmed this to be the case for this educational IOC. It was clear that the efforts made by leadership were important to the formation and maintenance of this IOC. The ability to remain flexible

and inclusive, invite feedback and dialogue, and step back when needed helped this IOC to form on a foundation of mutual respect and trust. The term *humble* was introduced in response to questions about leadership during three different interviews.

In addition to leadership behaviors, participants from each organization learned how to work together to identify goals that would connect them longitudinally, creating more opportunity for sustainability and lasting change. The ability to form collaborative goals was significant to the development of the IOC, as it required organizational shifts from a focus on more traditional goals. For example, the community college extended its reach by addressing the needs of students during summer prior to their fall enrollment in college, and the high school did the same by funding a part-time counselor whose office was on the college campus. Language also shifted, with the high school discussing the need for their students to be *college ready*, and the college discussing how they could be more *student ready*. Similarly, the Foundation, who acknowledged having little understanding of the status of education in the community prior to 2013, shifted their priorities to center their work on education as the core of their community development initiatives. These collaborative goals generated the sense of ownership that seemed pervasive across the organizations.

Conclusion

During the initial coding and analysis of data it became evident that strengths in one domain were connected to strengths in another domain. Strong leadership encouraged and supported the evaluation cycle. Feedback and data from the evaluation cycle influenced the creation of goals and the allocation of resources, and the attitudes and behaviors of individual collaboration members impacted the ability of the IOC to form a

foundation based on mutual respect and trust. By engaging the broader community, initiative stakeholders strategically managed the change process and built the capacity for a sustained, lasting impact.

It also became evident that the formation of the IOC and the goals of the IOC were interdependent. During each interview, collaboration members discussed their work in terms of the goals rather than the process, despite questions focused on their process. Interviewees were clearly invested in who they were working for, which was their motivation for what they were doing. For this IOC, the *what* and the *wh*y were important to understanding the *how*. Throughout this initiative, the IOC helped to build pride, and a sense of possibility, within a community by initiating reciprocal relationships and aligning goals that were mutually beneficial. Each organization contributed resources, time, and innovative ideas as a result of the relationships they formed and opportunities to benefit themselves, their collaborators, and those they were serving.

Limitations

As discussed in chapter 3, there were limitations to the methodology selected for this research study, including the chance of researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and the lack of statistical generalizability (Polit & Beck, 2014). Researcher bias was mitigated by using the modified CQR methodology (Hill, 2012), in which the researcher attempted to increase the reliability of the findings by having additional researchers analyze the data and engage in multiple discussion about the findings before making assumptions or conclusions. In addition to limitations inherent in qualitative research methodology, there were also limitations to the data collection and analysis of this case study.

Saldana (2015) suggested coding data throughout the collection of evidence, not once the researcher is preparing their data for analysis. The author noted that the process of coding during data collection could support more accurate interpretations of the data, as there would be less likelihood of forgetting an occurrence, or incorrectly remembering events. Several documents used in his study were from secondary data sources, having been collected by researchers prior to this researcher's work on the initiative. As such, this researcher had to rely on her own interpretation of the information in those cases. All data collected between 2015 and 2017 were collected by this researcher, however, which helped to increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the existing documents.

In addition to the potential for researcher bias and mis-interpretation of secondary data, during qualitative studies the researcher often forms relationships with key stakeholders, potentially impacting the stakeholders' responses (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Crowe, Inder, and Porter (2105) noted that the "dynamic nature of participants' perceptions of their experiences needs to be central to the interpretation of those responses" (p. 7). During interviews, it is possible that participant responses were skewed positive because of their relationship to the interviewer. In the case of this qualitative study, this researcher was part of the organization being paid by the school district and the Foundation to conduct independent research and evaluation. Although this dissertation was not part of the evaluation process, the interviews and data collected for this study were. Participants may have adjusted their comments to reflect positively on their organization to influence the outcomes of the evaluation.

Recommendations for Future Research

Despite studies in the fields of business and healthcare that provide support for the benefits of engaging IOCs to meet the complex needs of consumers, there is relatively little empirical research on how these collaborations are formed and sustained in educational settings. This exploratory study focused on one IOC with a set of goals designed to meet the perceived needs of their community. Although the IOC was initially formed to address educational outcomes, collaboration partners found that they were more interested in supporting the success of their community, of whom students were a critical part. To better understand the complexities of IOC in education, recommendations for future research are highlighted below.

Expand the scope of research to include larger, more diverse collaborations and communities. This exploratory case study was designed to focus on one IOC formed in a small community in Washington State. Despite changes in the community over the past 10 years, the population for this study did not keep pace with current trends in national demographic data that suggest students and communities are becoming increasingly more diverse. Future research on IOC in education that focus on larger, more diverse communities would help to better understand the attributes of these collaborations that are more transferable to communities with a more diverse population.

In addition to broadening the scope of this research in terms of size and diversity, it would be beneficial to conduct a collective case study (Creswell, 2013) to compare multiple IOCs in the field of education concurrently, documenting the processes, procedures, and perceptions of participants in real time. Results from this qualitative study highlighted the importance of the individual stakeholders, relationships, and

leadership attributes that impacted the IOC. A collective case study would provide the opportunity to identify similarities and differences between communities to look for patterns.

Conduct mixed-methodology research on education focused IOCs. This study focused primarily on the formation and sustainability of the IOC however, it became clear that one integral part of the IOC were the collective goals. Future research exploring the qualitative experiences and quantitative outcomes of an IOC in education would provide insight into the types of metrics and goals that add value to the IOC's work. Additionally, an analysis of outcomes in conjunction with qualitative perspectives would help to understand how to adapt and shift IOC priorities should initial efforts fail to yield the desired results.

Include student voice in future research on education focused IOCs. Although the study of this IOC included the perspectives of several different stakeholder groups, student voice may have added to the rich narrative, but was not included. There is research to suggest that including student voice in educational reform has significant impacts on outcomes (Cook-Sather, 2002, 2006; Holdsworth, 2000; Simmons, Graham, & Thomas, 2015). Future studies of IOC in education would benefit from the inclusion of student voice to strengthen the qualitative understanding of how the IOC impacts all members of the community.

Final Reflection on Findings.

Recently, I have come to understand that the system of education is extremely complex. While it has been an influential part of childhood development in the United States for hundreds of years, the education system has not necessarily kept pace with the

dynamic shifts in communities throughout the country. As a parent, I send my children to school every morning with the hope that they will learn something new, build friendships, and feel prepared for what comes next. As an educator in my own classroom, I often thought about my work from a somewhat self-centered perspective, setting goals to move students to the next academic level so I was meeting expectations for my own performance. Sometimes I just wanted us to make it through the day. In each of these roles; parent and educator, my assumptions and experiences were based on the privileges I was awarded for being white and middle class.

The opportunity to work with the CSSD has transformed the way I view education. As a researcher collaborating with the community, I was able to explore the education system in depth, identifying strengths, challenges, and frustrations. I now understand what a privilege this has been. Through this research, and my continued work with the district and community partners, I am also beginning to understand that to provide the best education, we need to understand *why* we are educating students. In the case of this school district and community, there were people willing to take the lead and ask the *why* questions necessary to begin the change process. Maybe this was luck, or good timing. For this community it was inspirational.

Although conversations in education have continued to shift with the political and social climate, it is my hope that those who make decisions about how we educate our children and communities take time to first understand why. While there is no one answer to this question, I believe it would allow the assumptions of those often in power to be challenged, which is a good thing. I know that for me, as an educator and researcher, this

will be the driving question for my work on the impact of educating communities moving forward.

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Appendix A

Cold Spring SD 2013 Needs Assessment

Cold Spring School District
Needs Assessment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Cold Spring School District employs 162 teachers serving approximately 2,900 students. The district has three elementary schools, which are divided by grade band: Cascade Elementary School (K-1), R.E. Bennett Elementary School (2-3), and Olympic Elementary (4-5). These feed into Cold Spring Middle School and then to Cold Spring High School. In addition, the district has the Blue River Academic School, which provides educational services to the Blue River School, a juvenile detention facility. On average, the district's teachers have 14.2 years of experience and 78.4% have a Master's degree. The executive summary summarizes district findings around the key areas identified in the RFP, as well information on the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) program.

Leadership

Focus group respondents from multiple stakeholder groups spoke positively about the district administration, with many respondents identifying the new superintendent as a positive change. Speaking of the new superintendent, a union representative shared, "He was hired in July and he came to every classroom in Cold Spring to introduce himself." Teachers noted more effective communication from the district office and increased opportunities to participate in distributed leadership via committees. The leadership's willingness to take calculated risks also emerged as a strength. A school board member said, "We tend to pilot a lot of things. We get a little head start. We are not afraid." The Cold Spring School District piloted the Teacher/Principal Evaluation Project (TPEP), and is piloting the SmarterBalanced assessment this year.

Building administration also emerged as a strength during focus group interviews. "I think we have some exceptional leadership at each school," one school board member remarked. Teachers tended to speak positively of their principals, noting strengths such as approachability, open communication, and supportiveness. "I feel like this is a building where you are not only respected, but your opinion matters and your work is appreciated," one staff member said, echoing a sentiment that emerged in a number of focus groups. Stakeholders in a number of buildings remarked on the "trust" their principals showed in them as professionals, remarking on their building administration's willingness to support risk-taking and on the degree of autonomy granted to them in the classrooms. However, this autonomy also means limited accountability of curriculum and instruction.

A focus for school leaders is the implementation of the new evaluation framework within CSD. As a pilot district, Cold Spring is participating in TPEP for the second year, using an evaluation rubric based around the Five Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (5D) from the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership (CEL). Half of the teachers in the district are being evaluated using the 5D rubric. These staff members were chosen on a volunteer basis. Next year, all teachers in the district will be evaluated using the new evaluation system. According to union representatives, teachers who are currently being evaluated using the old rubric will partner with teachers who have piloted the new 5D rubric.

Focus group interviews with union and district representatives indicated some aspects of the TPEP rollout presented a challenge. A district official acknowledged, "The teacher evaluation is far ahead of the principal evaluation." In addition, there has been some confusion as to how to apply the new rubric to special education teachers who are not classroom-based. When asked about the new evaluation system, union representatives said they were working "to layer in the teacher voice, the collaborative climate, and the support needed for growth, mentorship, and make it a growth model as opposed to a punitive model." One union representative said:

It is a big change in a lot of ways, but most of us think it is the way to go. People don't like the old evaluation model. The new evaluation means we have to keep more records, show students growth, and that a detailed conversation that has to take place.

"It gives [teachers] vocabulary and language for what they were doing," a union official said of the new evaluation system. Both union representatives and district officials described the relationship between the union and the district as collaborative.

Budget and Resources

Generally, staff members agreed funds were allocated across the district in alignment with school improvement goals. Survey results indicate the majority (72.7%) of Cold Spring staff members agree their school allocates resources in alignment with school improvement goals. However, when asked to identify barriers in the district, one union representative named time and money as challenges, but added, "If [the district] had more of either, they would provide it." Some stakeholders raised concerns about the number of resources that get funneled into the STEM program, creating a sense of "haves and have nots." However, other stakeholders pointed out that a significant portion of STEM funding comes from private donors, such as the Cold Spring Foundation. Staff members also spoke with pride about the STEM program. As one teacher put it, "We are really excited about STEM and our advanced and average students have some incredible opportunities. We want to make sure that all kids have opportunities like this." In terms of time, limited opportunities for teachers to meet and collaborate in grade-level or department teams was a frequently-mentioned concern. "The biggest barrier is the lack of collaboration time," one teacher said.

Aging facilities and technology also emerged as barriers during focus group interviews. Teachers mentioned an aging infrastructure in terms of some school buildings. "Some

facilities are so old," one teacher said. District officials also acknowledged this problem. One official explained, "With state funding, our adoption cycle got suspended, and our facilities plan got stopped." In terms of technology, stakeholders spoke of wanting to find more effective ways to use the available resources. To address this question, the district has hired a technology consultant, Phil Crocker, to conduct an in-depth assessment of the district's use of technology resources and to help formulate a plan to move forward.

Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum. At the elementary level, teachers are using the recently adopted district reading (Houghton Mifflin *Journeys*) and math (*Math Connects)* curricula. Staff members indicated the reading curriculum was aligned with Common Core State Standards (CCSS), but that the math curriculum still needed work. Aside from the core subjects, some elementary teachers raised concerns about "inadequate" social studies and science curricula. The schools have recently purchased science kits, but teachers indicated they have yet to determine how well the new materials align with the standards. Another staff member mentioned social studies curriculum would be replaced soon.

Middle school teachers also indicated their new language arts curriculum is aligned to the CCSS, while curricula for other subjects, such as social studies, are still aligned to the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs). Teachers working with curricula that is not adapted to CCSS report having "a big work load" as they need to supplement material to guarantee it is standards-based. According to some focus group members, the math curricula at the middle school "is not even sort of aligned" to CCSS, but the math department educators work together to supplement materials to ensure students are engaging in rigorous work.

At the high school, staff members acknowledged the transition to the CCSS was still in the early stages, and that some departments were ahead of others. Some of the departments are at the point of aligning their lessons and assessments with the CCSS, but this work appears to be in the very early stages and limited to a few departments. At Green Hill, CCSS-alignment was similarly in the early stages.

Instruction. Focus group interviews indicated that training around the CEL 5D instructional framework (as opposed to the CEL5D evaluation rubric) was inconsistent. While CEL 5D introduced a new shared vocabulary in terms of instruction to the district, many staff members were still gaining a common awareness of research-based instructional strategies and had yet to make the transition to common practice. As one staff member described, "The TPEP lends itself to common understanding [of effective practices]. We are getting there. Those discussions about good teaching practices will occur." Another stakeholder spoke of the need for sustained effort and attention to "changing how teachers teach."

The BERC Group conducted classroom observations in 150 classes district-wide. Overall, researchers observed instruction that was aligned with Powerful Teaching and Learning in 37% of Cold Spring classrooms, 11 points lower than the STAR Average, and there were variations across school levels (See Figures 1 and 2). According to

classroom observation results, strengths for Cold Spring School District are in the areas of students actively reading, writing, and/or communicating in class (*Skills*) and the classrooms being supportive learning environments for the students (*Relationships*). Three areas for improvement include students demonstrating conceptual knowledge (*Knowledge*), students demonstrating thinking through reflection and metacognition (*Thinking*), and students extending their learning into relevant contexts (*Application*). For complete results, please refer to the full *Cold Spring School District: STAR Classroom Observation Report*. The STAR Data is also available in Appendix D.

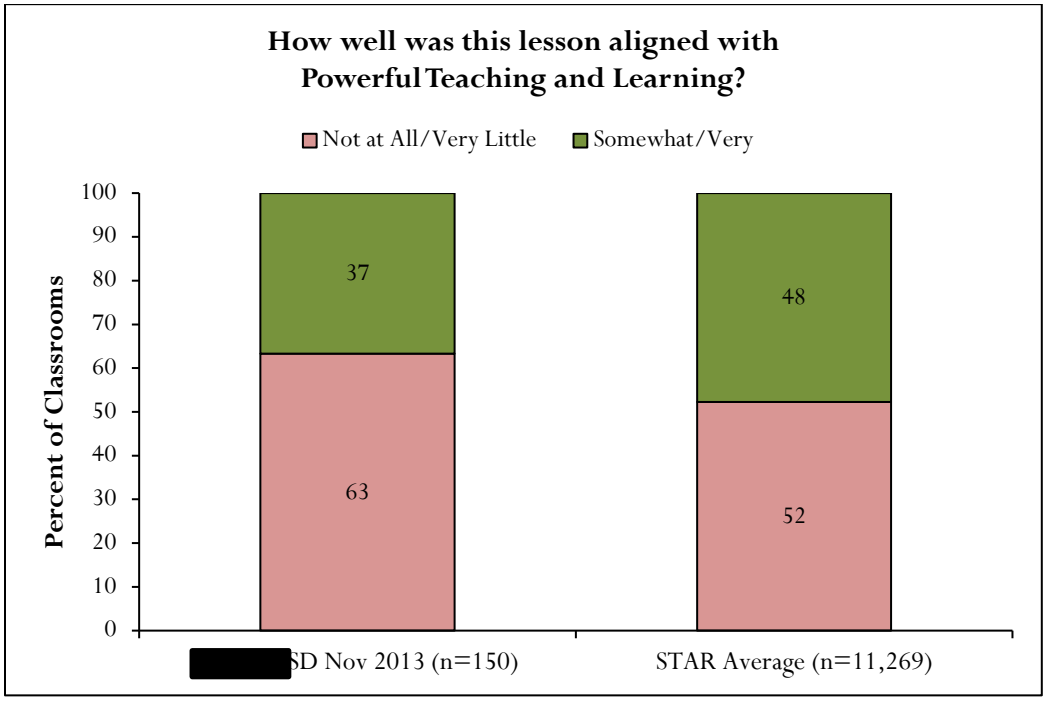


Figure 7. Cold Spring STAR data - Overall

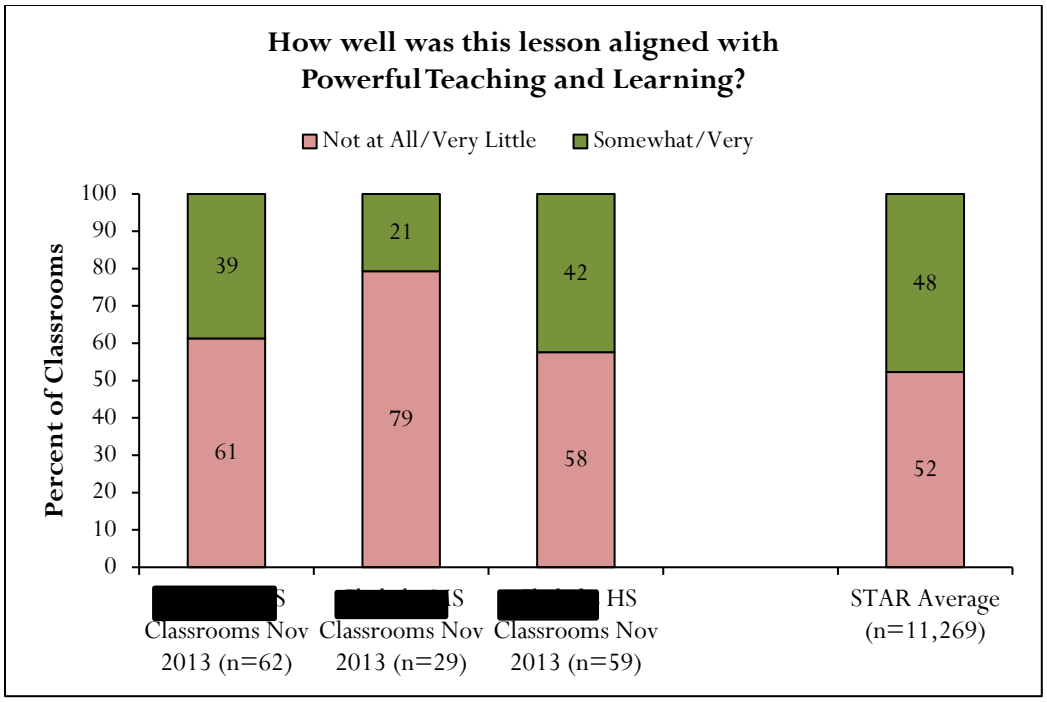


Figure 8. Cold Spring STAR data - Overall, by level

Professional Development

Across the district, staff members reported engaging in a number of professional development (PD)offerings, including trainings on the new language arts and math curricula, CCSS, and CEL 5D. One principal explained, "If somebody has a desire to go to something, we have some contractual money we have to spend on professional development and that has to be spent by the committee. Their constraints are really tight about what they can fund." At each school, a staff development team coordinates staff developmental goals and facilitates the appropriate use of staff development funds to support the goals. Staff members indicated teachers attend individual trainings with the expectation that they will share their learning with the rest of the staff. However, there does not appear to be a systemic method of ensuring this sharing takes place.

PD activities appear to be largely chosen by these staff development teams, with input from the district in regard to ongoing initiatives such as TPEP or CCSS. According to one principal, "The staff development committee meets and looks at the things we want to build on, then we decide whether or not we should utilize in-house expertise."

Several classified employees indicated they would like more professional development. In addition, multiple focus group respondents indicated needing more training in the CCSS. Green Hill teachers were also particularly concerned about the lack of regularly scheduled professional development concerning assault response, de-escalation, or self-defense.

School Environment

When asked to identify strengths in the district, answers tended to center around dedicated staff members and supportive school environments. Several people mentioned that teachers, once hired, tended to stay in Cold Spring long-term. Many staff members said the culture of their school was supportive and respectful of their work. This is clearly a strength throughout the district.

Similarly, researchers found evidence of positive relationships between adults and students in the schools. District-wide, 93% of lessons observed scored a 3 or 4 on Indicator 13, indicating those teachers had assured their classroom is a positive, inspirational, safe, and challenging academic environment. Staff members reported many different strategies for establishing and maintaining relationships with their students, including looping with advisories, talking to them in the hallways, asking them about their day, and generally showing interest in their lives. “The culture of our district is about relationships,” one district official said. “Because of this, there are layers of support for our students.”

Assessment and Accountability

Survey and focus group data indicated that, although staff members are conducting appropriate assessments, they are not necessarily using the data from those assessments to regularly plan instruction. One staff member explained, "I think data can be helpful, but we don't know how to use it, and we are not up-to-date on the technology we need to use to access it." All staff members in the Cold Spring School District have access to Homeroom, a data collection site where teachers can compare and analyze student data over time; however, the extent to which staff members utilize this system is unclear to researchers. One staff member said they’d had “zero training” on Homeroom so far.

Researchers could not find any evidence that data was being analyzed by subgroup indicator (e.g., race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, etc.) in order to intentionally develop strategies aimed at closing the achievement gap.

College Career (Readiness/Success)

Stakeholders from multiple focus groups shared that one of the district’s primary foci is on college and career readiness. The district’s strategic plan for 2008 to 2013 included providing opportunities for ninth through 12th grade students to develop a pre-graduation plan, providing opportunities for career information, career counseling, and school-to-work opportunities for students of all grade levels. Stakeholders spoke of wanting to raise standards and expectations. For example, district officials envisioned a future where Cold Spring graduates regularly competed with graduates of private schools on the east coast for spots in Ivy League colleges.

However, stakeholders from multiple groups acknowledged work still needed to be done to improve college and career readiness in the district. When asked what the district was doing to support college and career readiness, one district official spoke frankly, saying, “I think we are doing a terrible job. It hasn’t been a focus.” A school board member shared, “I believe the district is solid for the college bound, and for many career bound students in specific areas. Offerings are numerous; however, there are gaps.”

One gap that emerged from focus group interviews was a shortage of offerings for career-bound students. Multiple focus group respondents spoke of wanting to improve offerings for career-bound students. A school board member said, “I would like to see more vocational kinds of things. Between Arlington [Community College] and Cold Spring, they have a strong construction program over there and we have so much STEM stuff over here.” That board member mentioned the possibility of expanding on the district’s working relationship with Cold Spring to expand possibilities for career-bound students.

Stakeholders also raised concerns that the culture of college awareness in the district could be more robust. A representative from the Cold Spring Foundation shared, “They (staff members) don’t talk about Husky Promise or Cougar Commitment. We don’t hear them talking about college or the opportunities.” During school visits, researchers noted few visible indicators of college-aware school environments. Few classrooms had college pennants or teacher diplomas on the walls, for instance, and researchers did not see much in the way of college posters, scholarship information, etc. in the general areas of the school. However, union officials spoke of improvements in this area. One teacher said, “All of us say, ‘when you get to college’ at least once a day . . . even from early grades, college is being seen as attainable.”

Increasing the culture of college awareness could also mean increasing awareness of scholarship opportunities, such as the College Bound program. According to the Washington Student Achievement Council, only 28 Cold Spring graduates were in Cohort I of the College Bound program, a surprisingly small number, for a district the size of Cold Spring. Some staff members explained that the push to sign up comes in the eighth grade, whereas many schools across the state have students apply in seventh grade. By moving applications a year earlier, Cold Spring Middle School would have an extra year to follow up with students who turn in incomplete applications and to contact parents of children who are eligible for the program, but did not apply. This would help to ensure that more Cold Spring students begin high school knowing their college will be paid for. These students could then be guided to take high school courses that ensure they graduate college-ready.

Multiple focus group members spoke of a need to revamp academic counseling services. Focus group interviews indicate comprehensive guidance is not in place at Cold Spring. “They have a reactive program,” a stakeholder said, adding that comprehensive guidance should be in place to make a systemic change. A district official explained, “The counselors don’t have time to explain the opportunities to the students, especially if they are doing well with classes and have good SAT [scores].” District officials also noted that some parents were unhappy that the counseling center is only open during school hours, making it difficult for working parents to gain information on things such as college eligibility requirements or financial aid.

An increased focus on academic counseling could also lead to more students enrolling in classes that lead to college eligibility. As described in the High School Outcomes section of this report, an analysis of course-taking patterns at Cold Spring High School indicated

the majority of high school graduates in the district are not eligible for four-year college admittance by Washington State HEC Board standards. Students who failed to meet college admissions requirements were most likely to lack requisite credits in English, math, and/or foreign language. As a result, a number of students who graduate from the Cold Spring School District will have to complete these requirements on their own, either at a community college or in remedial college courses, before they are able to begin working on their bachelor's degrees. A stronger focus on academic counseling could help parents and students to better understand college eligibility requirements and choose high school courses accordingly.

In addition, the district may want to revamp high school graduation requirements to ensure that more students graduate college-ready. A review of current graduation requirements at Cold Spring High School shows that students are only required to complete 3.0 credits of English, rather than the 4.0 credits required for college eligibility. Although the 3.0 required credits in mathematics line up with college eligibility requirements, Cold Spring students are not required to complete a minimum level of mathematics, while college eligibility requires at least 1.0 credit of intermediate algebra/trigonometry or higher. Additionally, students are not required to complete foreign language credits, although two credits of a foreign language are required for admission to a four-year college. The gap between high school graduation requirements and college eligibility requirements, combined with the lack of a comprehensive guidance system, could mean students are graduating from high school without realizing they lack vital courses for college eligibility.

It is notable that students taking courses in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) program were almost three times more likely to graduate from high school meeting college entrance requirements than their peers outside of the program. As part of the push towards college and career readiness, multiple stakeholders mentioned the STEM program at the high school as a bright spot in the district. The STEM program offers a number of advanced course offerings, and through generous donations from the Cold Spring Foundation, students have access to cutting-edge technology. However, prerequisite requirements mean that many Cold Spring students do not have access to these advanced course offerings and opportunities. For example, only students who take algebra in middle school can take biology as a freshman, which opens the door for them to progress all the way to molecular genetics. Focus group interviews indicated that, prior to this year, in order to take eighth grade algebra, students needed to be placed in advanced math, which depended on a recommendation from a fifth-grade teacher and (due to limited seats in the course) on parent advocacy. "We have barriers to letting kids take eighth-grade algebra," one district official said. Erasing those barriers would allow more students to take advantage of the high school's STEM program. So would differentiating the STEM coursework, and perhaps eliminating gateway classes when possible, to allow more students to enroll. This may also help to increase College and career Readiness across the system.

STEM

This program was funded, in part, through the Cold Spring Foundation, a nonprofit organization which lists “to pursue academic excellence in the Cold Spring schools” as part of its mission statement.

Researchers noted a number of strengths in the STEM program at Cold Spring High School. One of the most notable is the strong and lasting partnerships the district has built with external partners, who provide financial support, as well as expertise that enhance teaching and learning opportunities. Funding from the Cold Spring Foundation, along with other donors, allows the high school to offer advanced coursework that one stakeholder said would otherwise be “impossible to fund.” Another staff member stated, “Programs like robotics are extra-curricular and require money and outside expertise to be successful.” The school partners with engineers, community college faculty and other community mentors to provide additional perspectives and expertise to the student in the robotics program. Researchers also found the leadership of the STEM program to be a strength, noting that that district and building administrators embrace a distributed leadership approach and foster respectful and trusting relationships with staff members, and demonstrate a willingness to take calculated risks to implement new programs and improve teaching and learning throughout the school.

Along with these strengths, researchers noted opportunities for the STEM program and philosophy to become more pervasive in the culture of Cold Spring, and the district as a whole. Although the high school offers a number of advanced classes, the presence of gatekeeper courses means only some students have access to STEM coursework, depending on their prior knowledge and experience. Differentiating the coursework could allow students with diverse histories of academic success to explore the STEM disciplines. Researchers also noted limited evidence of learning experiences that challenged students to develop higher-order thinking skills through processes such as inquiry, problem solving, and creative thinking. Furthermore, although programs such as Homeroom and easyCBM provide access to a wide variety of student data, teachers need training in data systems, as well as regular collaboration time, in order to truly use the results of these data to drive instruction. The STEM research also recommends that school personnel develop multiple measures of student success (e.g. formative, benchmark, summative, and performance-based assessments). Family involvement in the STEM program is another area of growth. Although the efforts of the school and community groups to engage all middle level students in STEM activities through enhanced mathematics instruction, free STEM summer camps, and access to free robotics kits are commendable, researchers found little evidence of family-focused supports, wraparound services, and outreach that engage family members in programs and services. Additionally, while the stakeholder component of the STEM program is very strong, researchers indicated this area could be strengthened by the addition of internship opportunities with local businesses and industry and the regular involvement of appropriate stakeholders in the design of improvement strategies and initiatives within the school district.

Additionally, researchers noted that effective STEM programs purposefully integrate STEM across all content areas and organize time for teachers to collaborate to design

interdisciplinary lessons. Though some teachers at Cold Spring work plan the content and pacing of lessons together, there is limited evidence of a school-wide plan that encourages the integration of STEM education across the entire school. One teacher explained, “The idea behind the whole school getting involved (with STEM) has never been broached.” Focus group interviews also revealed frustration about “the haves and the have nots” when it comes to funding for STEM disciplines as compared to other programs in the school. “There is so much money being funneled into the STEM program, while other departments have outdated materials and do not have the same opportunities to receive training,” one staff member explained. To build on strengths and address the weaker sections of the program, researchers recommended that leaders establish and communicate a clear vision and direction of the STEM program throughout the school and to all stakeholders; ensure effective instruction is at the heart of the professional development agenda; and provide time for teachers to regularly analyze student level data for instructional planning.

District Wide Synthesis Report
Cold Spring School District

INTRODUCTION

The BERC Group conducted a district review for the Cold Spring School District (CSD). As part of this review, we conducted School and Classroom Practices Studies in all six schools within the district, and we aggregated the results into this report. The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Cold Spring School District regarding any areas emerging in school studies that may need system-wide focus and support. This report is intended to be formative in nature to assist in the ongoing implementation of improvement goals and action plans at the district level. Evaluators obtained information during site visits on November 12 (Blue River Academic School, Rain Elementary School, and Lake Elementary School), November 13 (Cold Spring High School) and November 14 (Stream Elementary School and Creek Middle School) of 2013. Researchers developed the suggested system-wide areas of focus and support by investigating each School and Classroom Practices Study. The report includes a methodology section, high school outcomes findings, and an overview the schools’ alignment to OSPI’s *Student and School Success Principles*. The report concludes with a summary and recommendations.

METHODOLOGY

Researchers collected and analyzed data using a multiple measures, mixed methodology approach. The collection of both quantitative and qualitative data adds scope and breadth to the study in addition to providing the ability to triangulate findings. A description of the data sources is provided below.

Data Sources

Researchers used the following data sources for the School and Classroom Practices Study to triangulate the findings. These data sources are integrated throughout the report.

Interviews and focus groups

A total of 317 people, including district and building administrators, certificated and non-certificated staff members, counselors, parents, students, school board members, community members, and consultants participated in interviews and focus groups.

Classroom observations
Researchers conducted 150 classroom observations to determine the extent to which teaching practices aligned with Powerful Teaching and Learning™ (reform-like teaching). We used the STAR Classroom Observation Protocol® to collect data around instruction in five areas: *Skills*, *Knowledge*, *Thinking*, *Application*, and *Relationships*.

Staff, student, and family surveys
School staff, students, and parents completed surveys aligned with the Student and School Success Principles. Researchers obtained 173 staff surveys, 952 student surveys (Grades 6 and above), and 303 parent surveys.

HIGH SCHOOL OUTCOMES DATA

This section of the report summarizes analyses of high school course taking patterns, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment and persistence data. These data only reflect the results of Cold Spring High School. Green Hill Academic School is not included.

Course Offering Patterns. Researchers gathered and analyzed master schedules, course catalogs, and section summary sheets from Cold Spring to determine changes in course offerings from the 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014 school years. Researchers tallied courses in English and math and placed them into three levels of rigor:

Below Standard: courses designated as remedial or below grade level
Standard: courses identified as at grade level
Above Standard: courses designated as honors courses, courses taken beyond college entrance requirements, or Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate.

The review excluded courses from special education, English Language Learners, English as a Second Language, LAP, Running Start, and independent study courses.

English and math course offering patterns from 2011-2012 through 2013-2014 are shown in Figures 1 and 2. In English, Cold Spring High School offers primarily Standard courses but also offers some Above Standard courses and some Below Standard courses. In the 2013-2014 school year, about one-quarter of the English classes offered were considered Below Standard. In math, the majority of courses are also at the Standard level; however, about 31% of the 2013-2014 math courses are Above Standard, and about 28% are Below Standard. The percentage of Below Standard math courses offered at Cold Spring increased over the last three years.

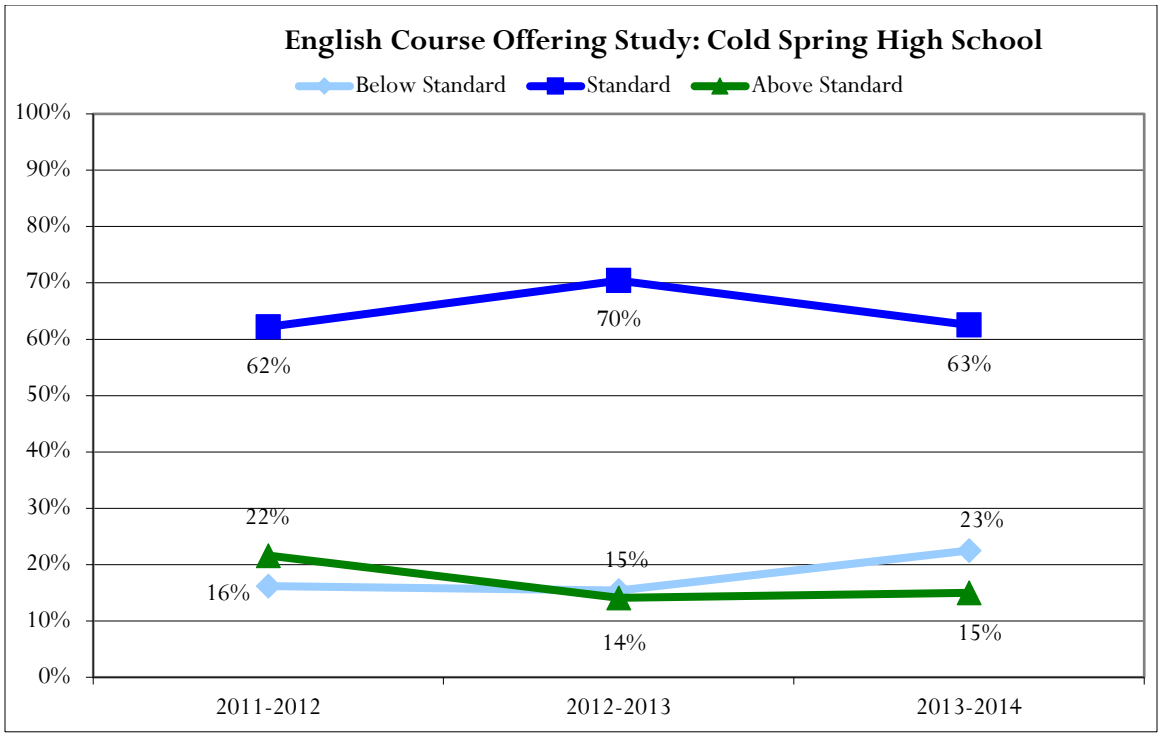


Figure 1. English Course Offering

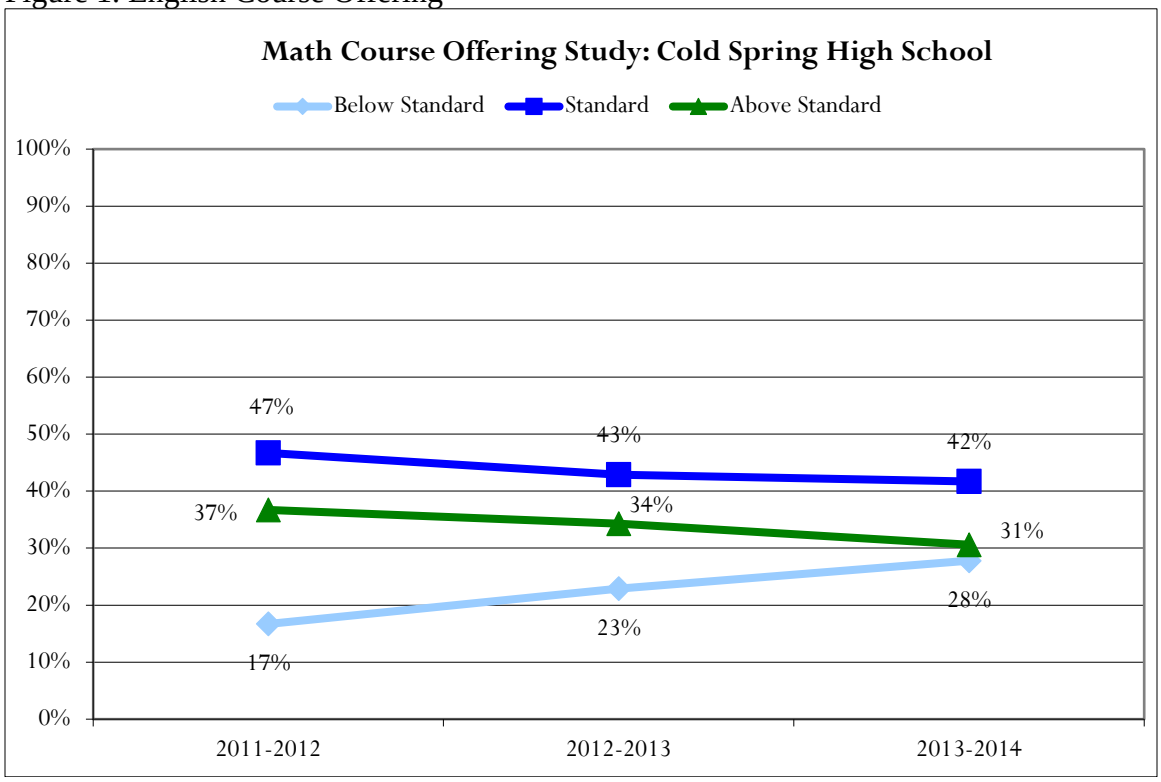


Figure 2. Math Course Offering

Course Taking Patterns and College Eligibility. Researchers collected transcripts for all graduating students in the 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013 school years from Cold Spring High School. A trained team of researchers, college admissions specialists,

and school counselors analyzed a sample of transcripts each year to determine if the courses taken met the Washington State four-year college and university admission standards. Although there was some variation among colleges, the general requirements include:

4 years of English, which must include three years of literature
3 years of mathematics, which must include an introduction to trigonometry
3 years of social studies
2 years of science, which must include at least one year of laboratory science (two years of laboratory science was required in 2010)
2 years of foreign language
1 year of fine arts (required by some colleges)

Of the 2013 high school graduates, 38% took the requisite courses for admission to a Washington 4-year college, meaning that the majority of students graduating from Cold Spring High School are not eligible for four-year college admittance by Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) standards (see Figure 3). The percentage of students meeting college eligibility requirements has increased overall since 2008. Overall results indicate that while the graduation requirements meet the state's minimum requirements for a high school diploma, requirements do not align with the colleges' admission requirements.

Students who failed to meet the requisite college preparation courses were most likely to lack the English, math, and/or foreign language requisite credits (see Figure 4). There has been some fluctuation year-to-year in the percentage of students meeting these requirements, but the general pattern has remained consistent for the last six graduating classes. A review of graduation requirements shows that Cold Spring High School students are not required to complete foreign language credits. Additionally, students are only required to complete 3.0 credits of English. Finally, while students are required to take 3.0 math credits, there is no minimum level, and many students take math classes at a standard less than that required for college admittance. Overall, these results show there is a gap between the diploma requirements and the requisite college preparation.

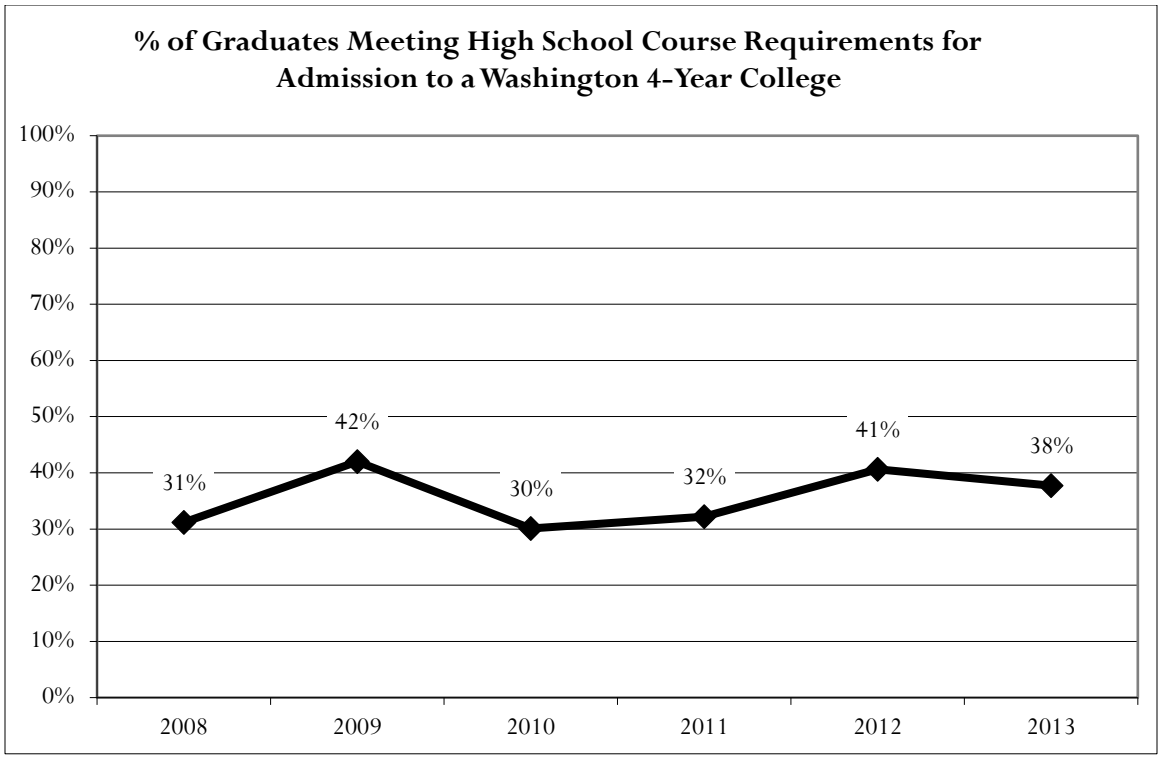


Figure 3. Percent of Graduates Meeting High School Course Requirements for Admissions to a Washington 4-year College

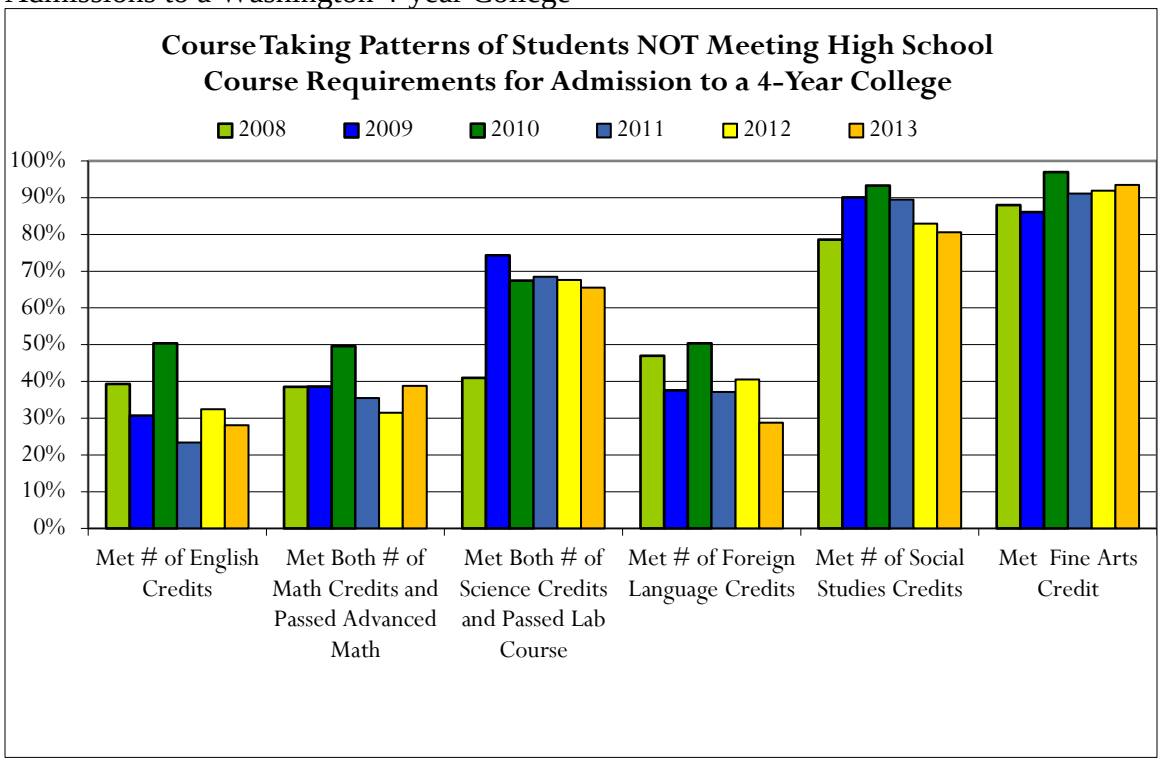


Figure 4. Course Taking Patterns of Students NOT Meeting High School Course Requirements

Of the 2012 high school graduates who took one or more STEM classes during their senior year, 79% took the requisite courses for admission to a Washington 4-year college,

while only 26% of non-STEM students met the admission requirements. This trend was very similar in 2013 with 73% of STEM students meeting the Washington 4-year college admission requirements and only 26% of non-STEM students met the same admission criteria. This means that graduating seniors taking one or more STEM classes during their senior year are much more likely to have taken the classes required to enroll in a 4-year college in Washington State than their peers who did not take a STEM class during their senior year (see Figure 5).

Students who failed to meet the requisite college preparation courses, whether they were STEM students or non-STEM students, were most likely to lack English and/or foreign language requisite credits. Non-STEM students also failed to meet math admission requisites at a high rate (see Figure 6). A review of graduation requirements shows that Cold Spring High School students are not required to complete foreign language credits.

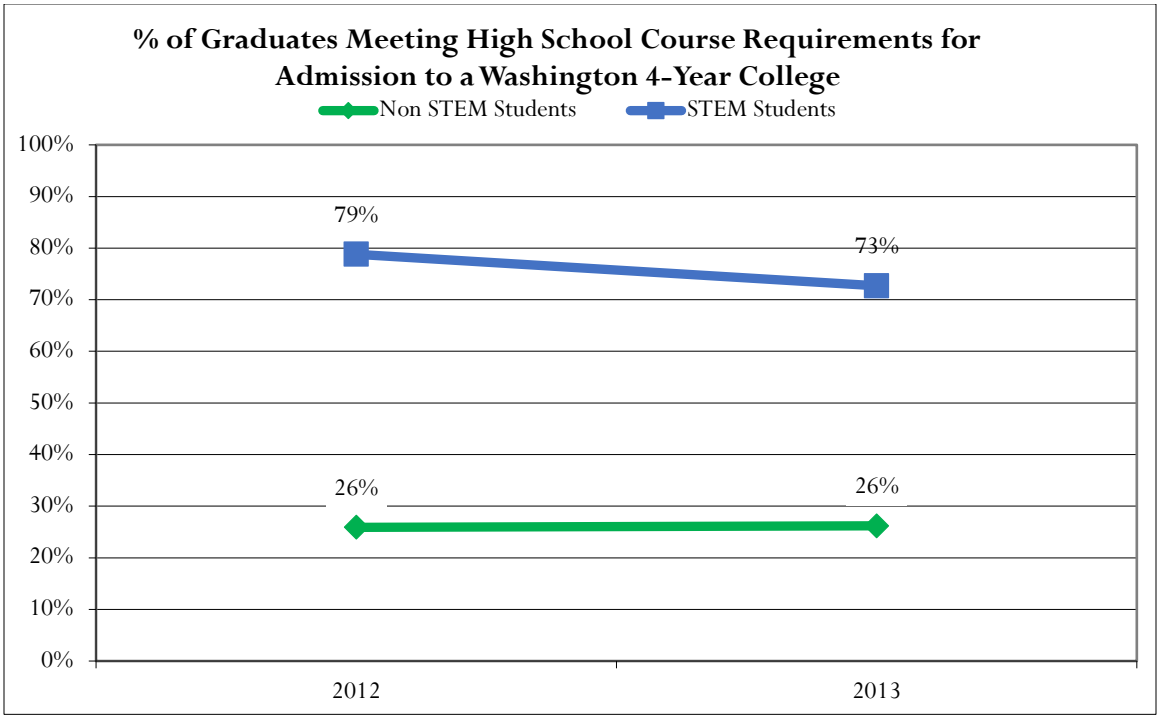


Figure 5. **Percent of Graduates Meeting High School Course Requirements for Admissions to a Washington 4-year College – STEM and Non-STEM Students**

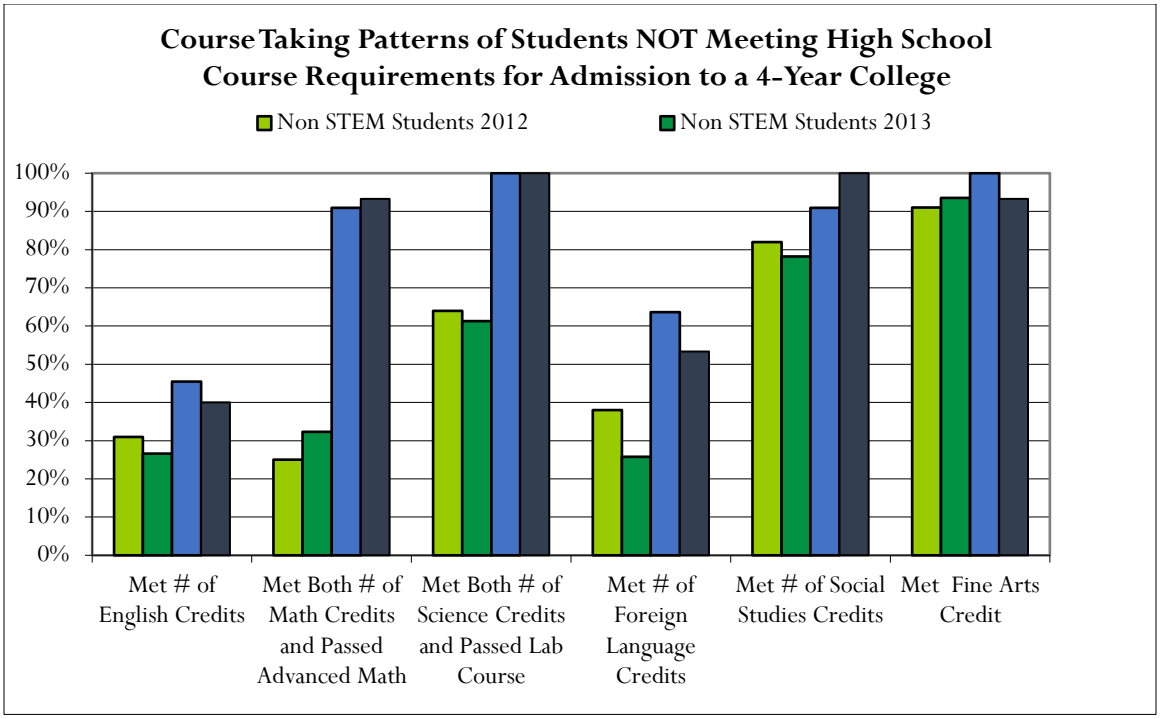


Figure 6. **Course Taking Patterns of Students NOT Meeting High School Course Requirements – STEM and Non-STEM Students**

Collectively, these results show that fewer than half the students graduating from Cold Spring High School meeting the minimum course taking requirements necessary for admission for a 4-year college. However, a greater percentage of students who take a least one STEM course meet the minimum 4-year course taking requirements. Students who failed to meet the requisite college preparation courses were most likely to lack the English, math, and/or foreign language requisite credits. However, STEM students took math at higher rates compared to Non-STEM students. Overall, these results show there is a gap between the diploma requirements and the requisite college preparation.

Graduation Rates. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for Washington State calculates an "estimated cohort graduation rate" for a given graduation class based on the P-210 form submitted annually by the districts. This calculated rate is based on only those students who begin in the fall of a given year with an expected graduation date of four years later and accounts for transfers and other factors. For example, students enrolled in the fall of 1998 would have an expected "on-time" graduation date of 2002. The methodology is appropriate for AYP of NCLB. Baseline estimated cohort graduation rates for 2004 through 2012 are shown in Figure 7. Graduation rates have fluctuated each year. Graduation rates for Cold Spring High School reached as high as 88% in 2005. The rates then dipped by about 10 percentage-points and remained there over the next four years. The rates then increased by about 10 percentage-points up to 87% for 2010 through 2012. Rates for Cold Spring are consistently higher than the state average.

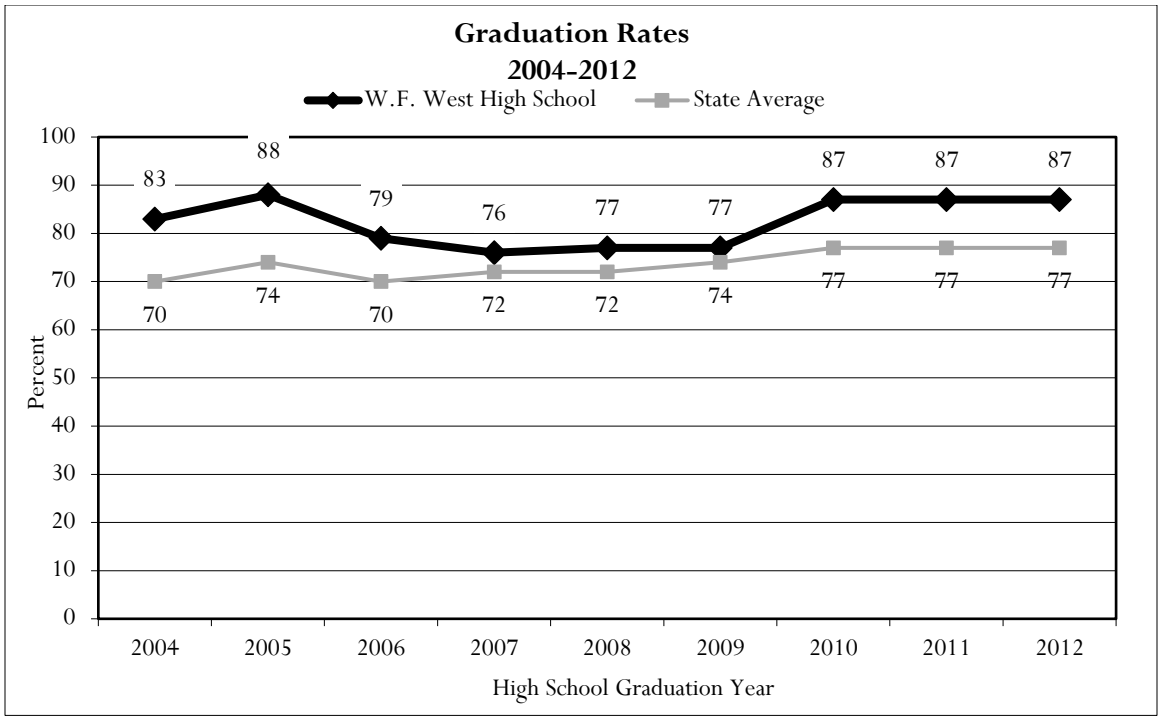


Figure 9. Graduation Rates 2004 – 2012
*Note: The adjusted 4-year cohort graduation rate is used for 2011 and for 2012.

College Awareness and College Perceptions. As part of the statewide program evaluation of Navigation 101, researchers from The BERC Group conducted a survey in 2012 and in 2013 of students at Cold Spring High School. These surveys include many questions that are relevant to the perceptions of students around college and career readiness. Figures 8, 9, and 10 display the results of the student survey. Student survey results show that the majority of students believe a college degree is important for obtaining a successful job and that their future career depends on going to college; fewer believe that high school has prepared them to succeed in college or that they know the high school courses necessary for college. Students expectations for college attendance mirror what they believe their teachers believe of them. Survey results show the majority of students plan to attend college after graduating from high school and most learn about college from parents and/or guardians. The percentage of students who report they receive information from teachers or counselors is considerably low, particularly for schools that implement the Navigation 101 program.

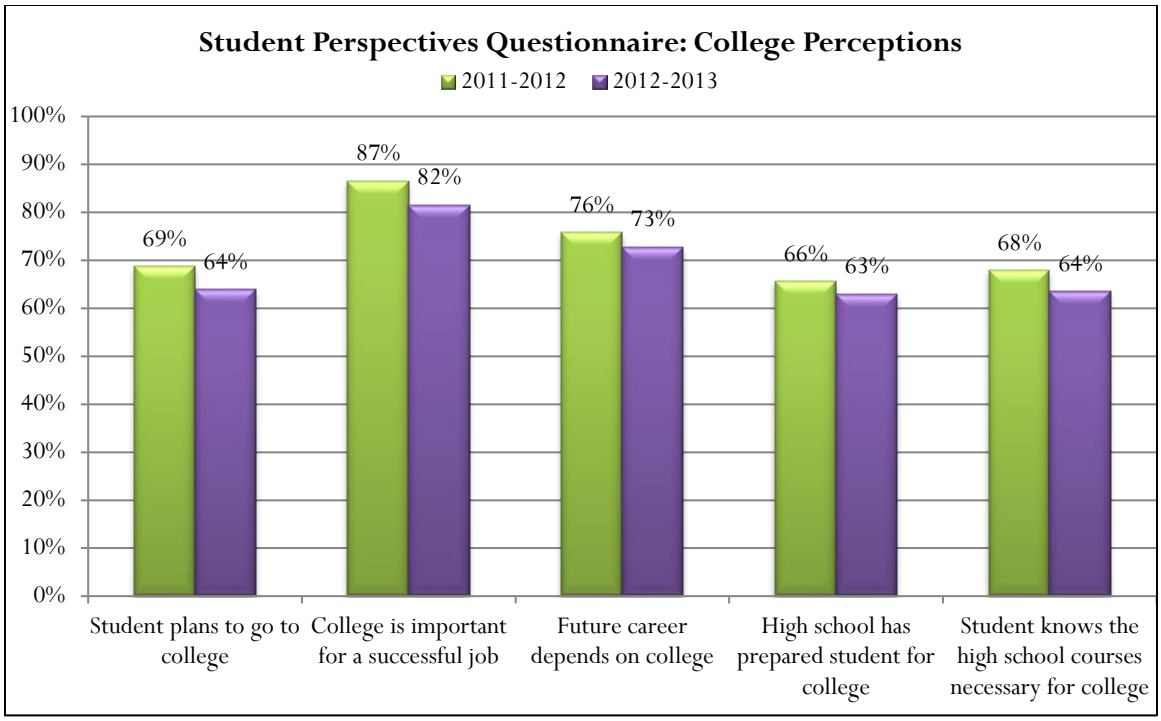


Figure 10. College Perceptions

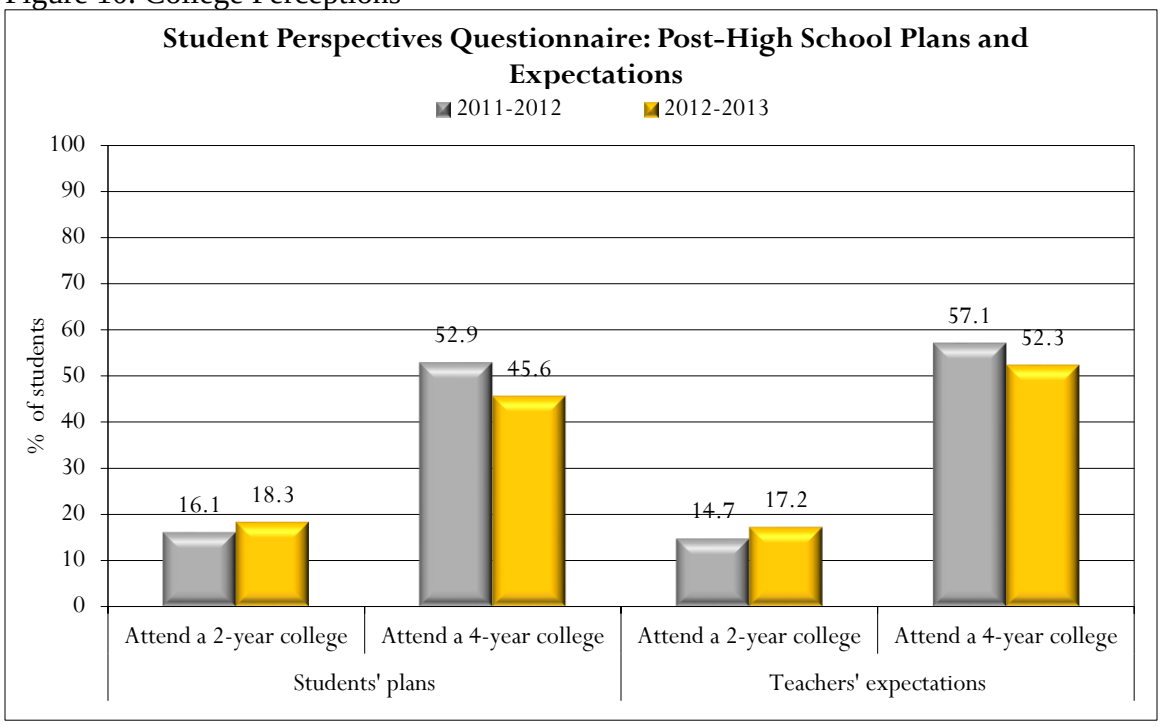


Figure 11. Post-High School Plans and Expectations

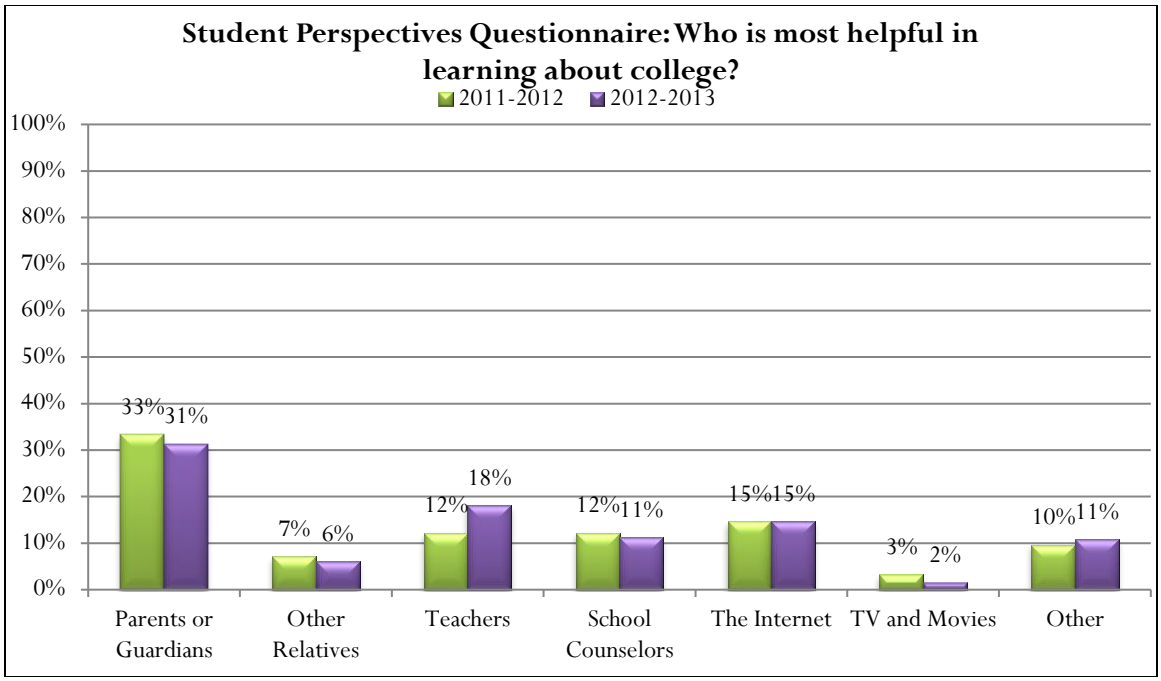


Figure 12. Learning about College

College Enrollment, Persistence, and Graduation Rates. The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) was established in 1993 by colleges and universities to serve as a national repository for comprehensive enrollment, degree, and certificate records. Since its beginnings, it has grown to contain more than 65 million student records from over 2,800 colleges and universities in the United States. As of 2012, these institutions enrolled approximately 93% of the nation's college students.

Researchers obtained college enrollment and persistence data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) for Cold Spring High School. These researchers collected information from Cold Spring for the graduating classes of 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012. Researchers submitted lists of the names, birth dates, and year of graduation, among other data, to NSC to be matched with the college reported enrollments from 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012. Researchers compiled and analyzed these yearly enrollment records to determine college enrollment persistence and college graduation rates for all Cold Spring High School graduates from these years.

"College direct" students are defined as high school graduates who attended college any time in the academic year immediately following their high school graduation. The college direct rates for the high school graduates from Cold Spring High School for 2004 through 2012 are presented in Figure 11. The percentage of college direct students from Cold Spring has decreased from 2004 to 2012 overall, however, about a 4 percentage-point increase occurred from 2011 to 2012. The disaggregated rates for STEM and Non-STEM students show that STEM students went to college the first year after high school at a much higher rate than Non-STEM students (see Figure 12).

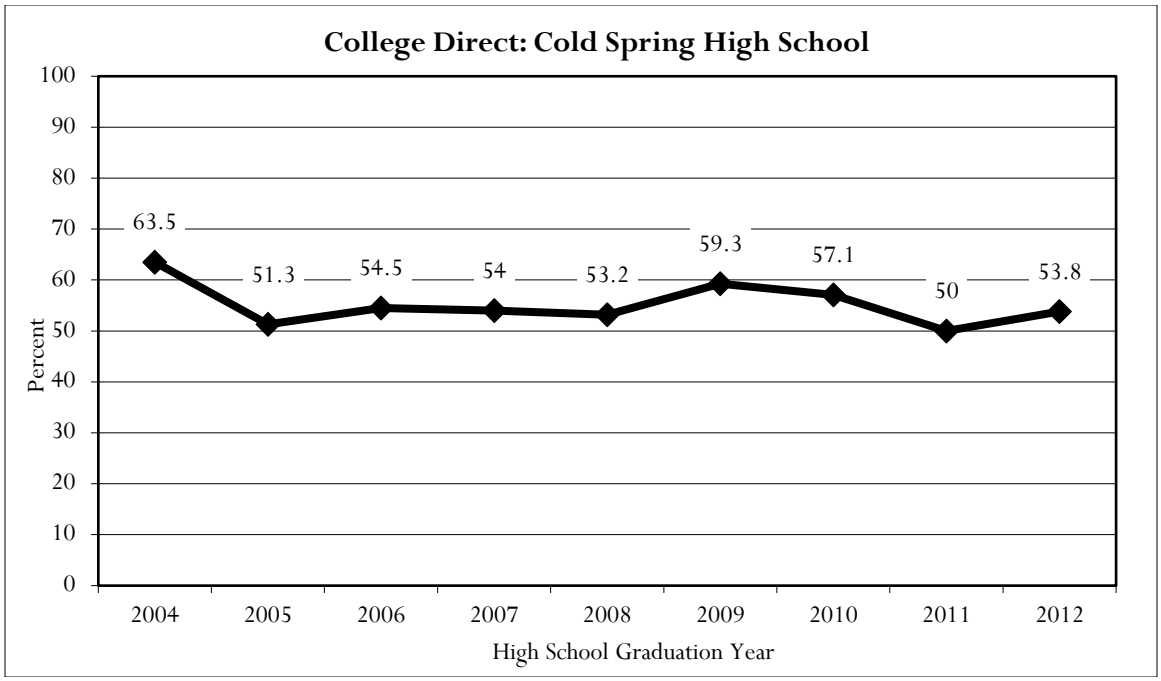


Figure 13. Percent "College Direct" – 2004-2012

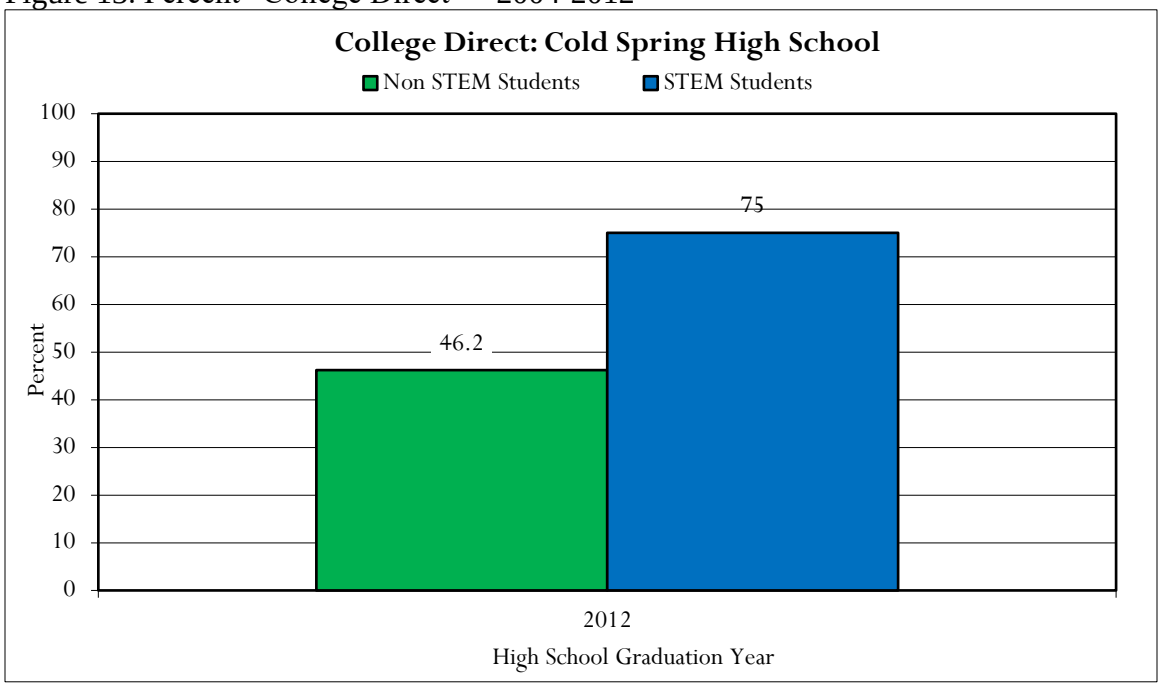


Figure 12. Percent "College Direct" for STEM and Non-STEM Students – 2012

The 2004 through 2011 college direct rates disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, and free and/or reduced-price meals (FRL) for Cold Spring High School are presented in Figure 13, 14, and 15, respectively. The college direct rates for white students are substantially higher than for Hispanic students for each year where data for both groups is available (Data are not reported for categories with less than 10 students). For most of the years, a gap exists in college direct rates by gender, with a higher percentage of female students attending college compared to males students. For the one year where data with FRL data, students not qualifying attended college at higher rates that those qualifying.

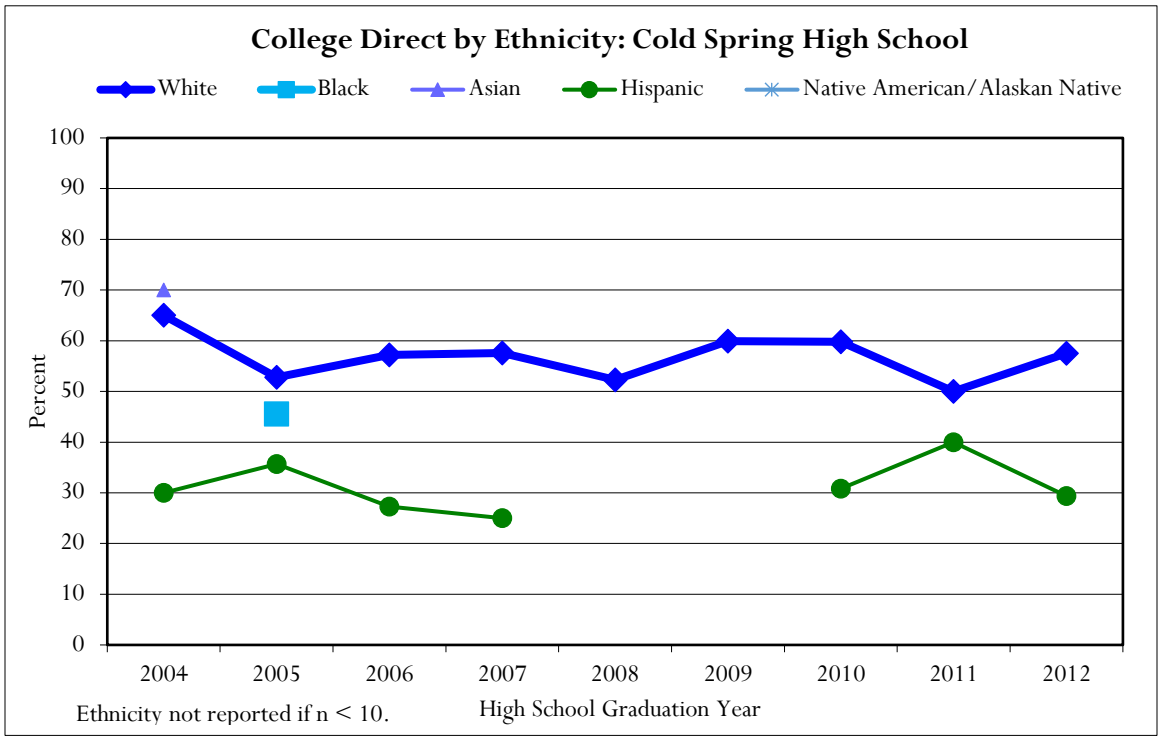


Figure 14. Percent "College Direct" by Ethnicity – 2004-2012

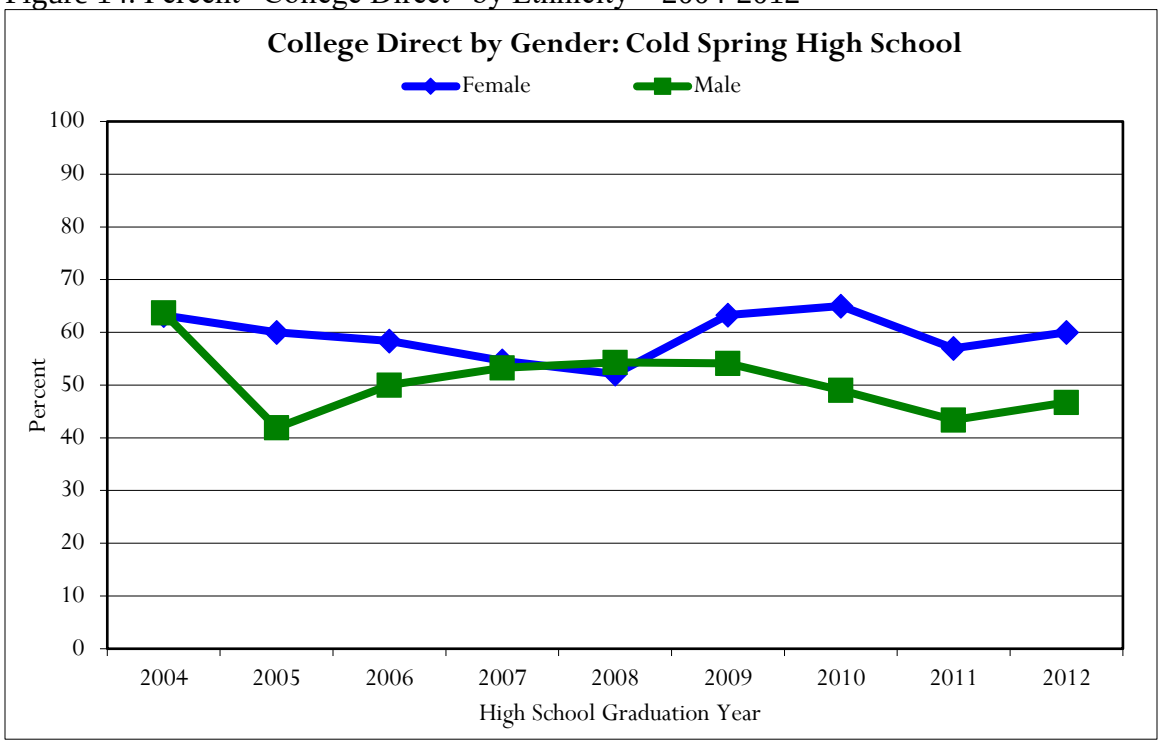


Figure 15. Percent "College Direct" by Gender – 2004-2012

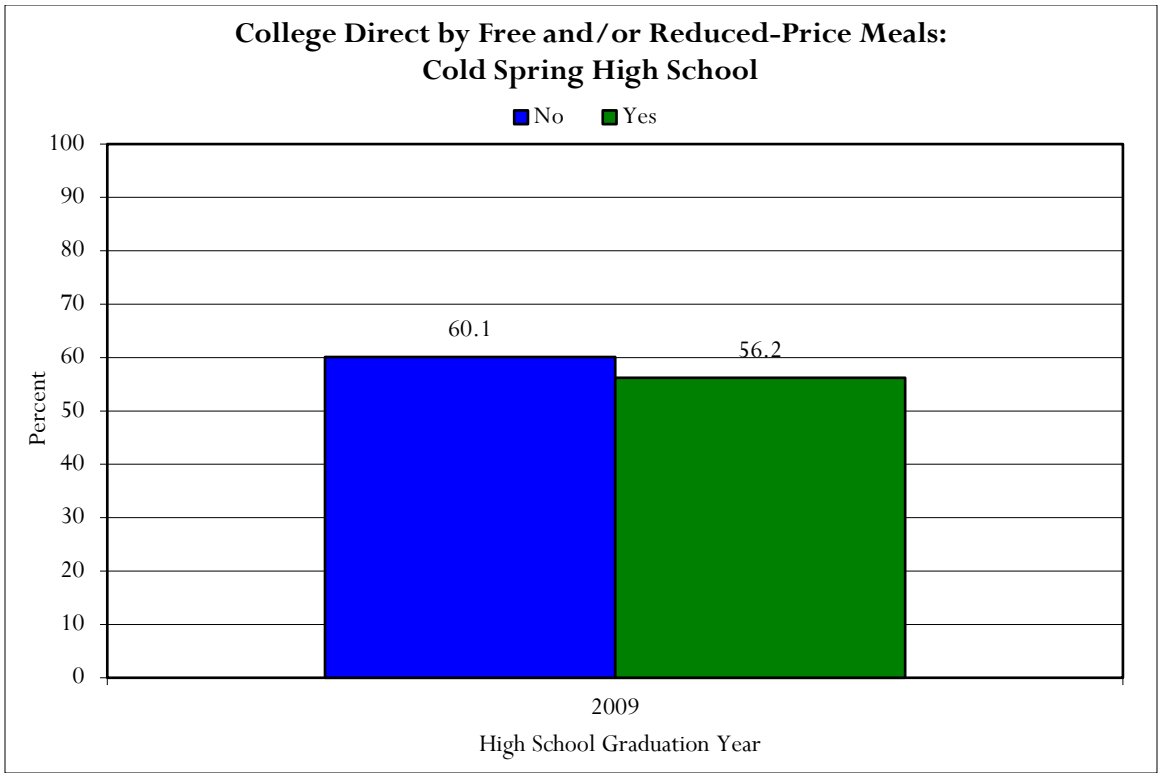


Figure 16. Percent "College Direct" by FRL – 2009

Figure 15 shows the percentages of graduates attending two- and four-year colleges the first year after graduating high school.[1] These data indicate a greater percentage of graduates from Cold Spring High School attend a two-year versus four-year colleges in all years. Disaggregated data for the STEM students shows the reverse pattern, with a far greater percentage of students who take STEM courses in high school enrolling in 4-year colleges compared to non-STEM students.

[1] The percentages may total more than 100% due to dual enrollments of some students.

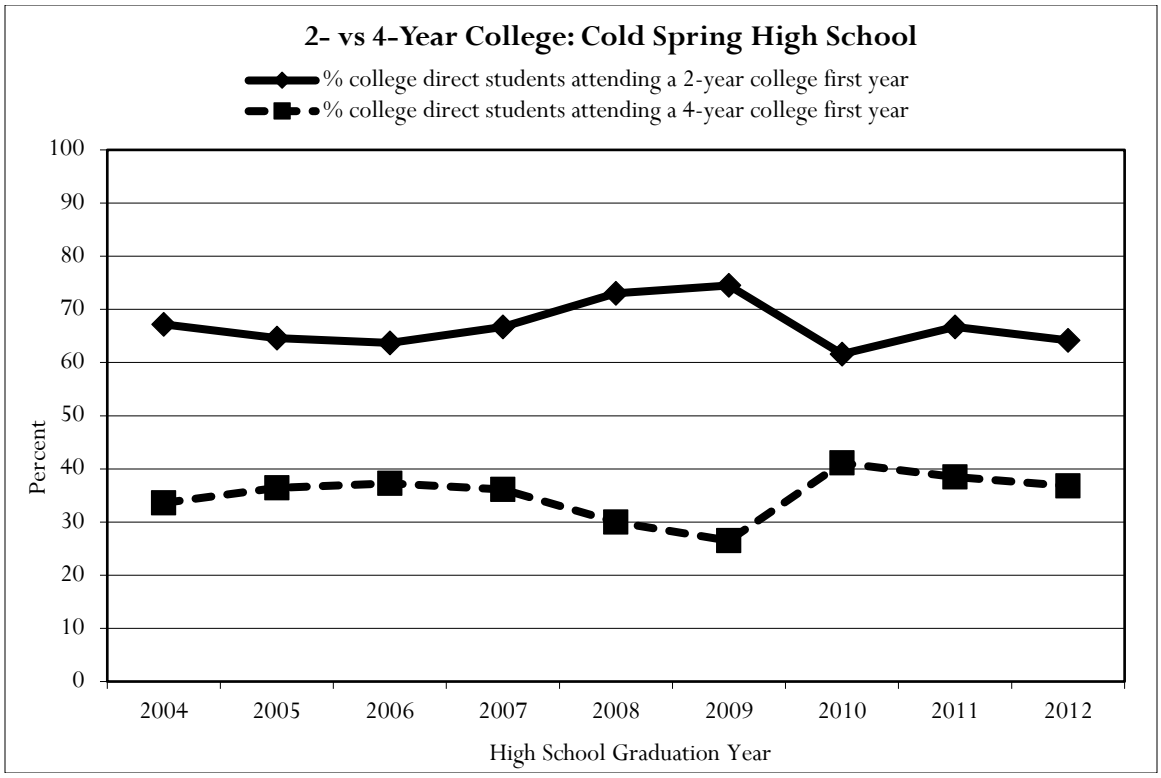


Figure 17. Percentage of "College Direct" Graduates Attending 2- vs. 4-year Colleges after Graduating High School – 2004-2012

The college persistence rate of college direct students from Cold Spring High School is presented in Figure 16. We defined "persisting in college" for college direct students as being enrolled anytime in a given year following high school graduation or having received a four-year college degree. Figure 9 illustrates the percent of 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011 high school graduates that were college direct and persisting into subsequent years of college.[2] For example, for 2004 high school graduates, approximately 64% were enrolled in college during the 2004-2005 academic year, the first year after graduation. In the second year after graduation, approximately 50% of the high school graduates were still enrolled in college. In the fifth year after graduation, about 32% of the high school graduates had attended college the first year after graduating high school and were still enrolled in college or had received their degree. By the ninth year after graduation, about 29% of the 2004 high school graduates had attended college the first year after graduating high school and were still enrolled in college or had received their degree. In general, the pattern for all graduates is a dip in college enrollment the first year after graduating from high school.

[2] Our definition of "Persistence" also includes students who had graduated from a four-year college.

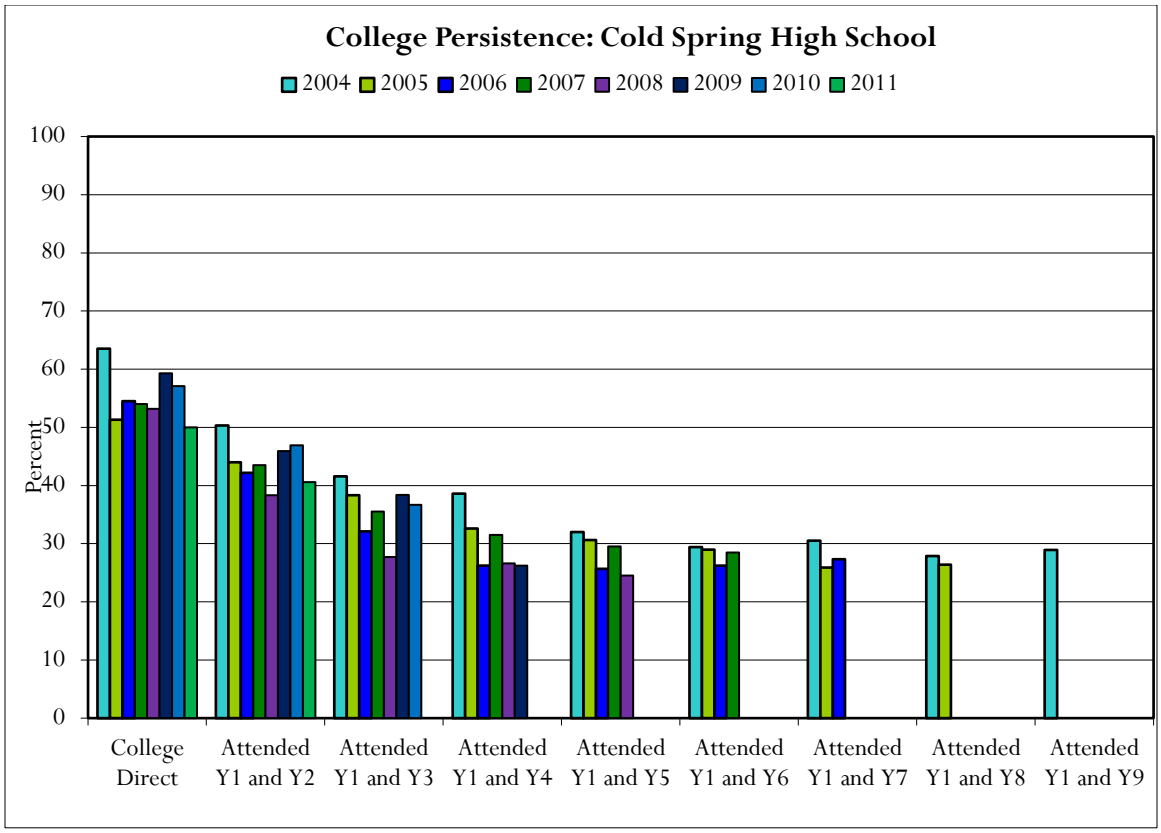


Figure 18. Percentage of "College Direct" Students Persisting in College

Note. "College Direct"=% of students enrolled first year after graduating high school. "Attended Y1 and Y2"=% of students attending college first year and have graduated from a four-year college or are still attending college second year after graduating high school.

Figure 17 shows a theoretical model that depicts the percentage of the students who enter Cold Spring High School as freshmen in high school, graduate from high school, and enroll and persist into the second and fourth years of college. For example, out of the entering freshmen for the class of 2004, approximately 83% graduated from high school, 53% attended college the first year after graduating from high school, 42% persisted into a second year of college or received a four-year degree, and 32% persisted into a fourth year of college or received a four-year degree.

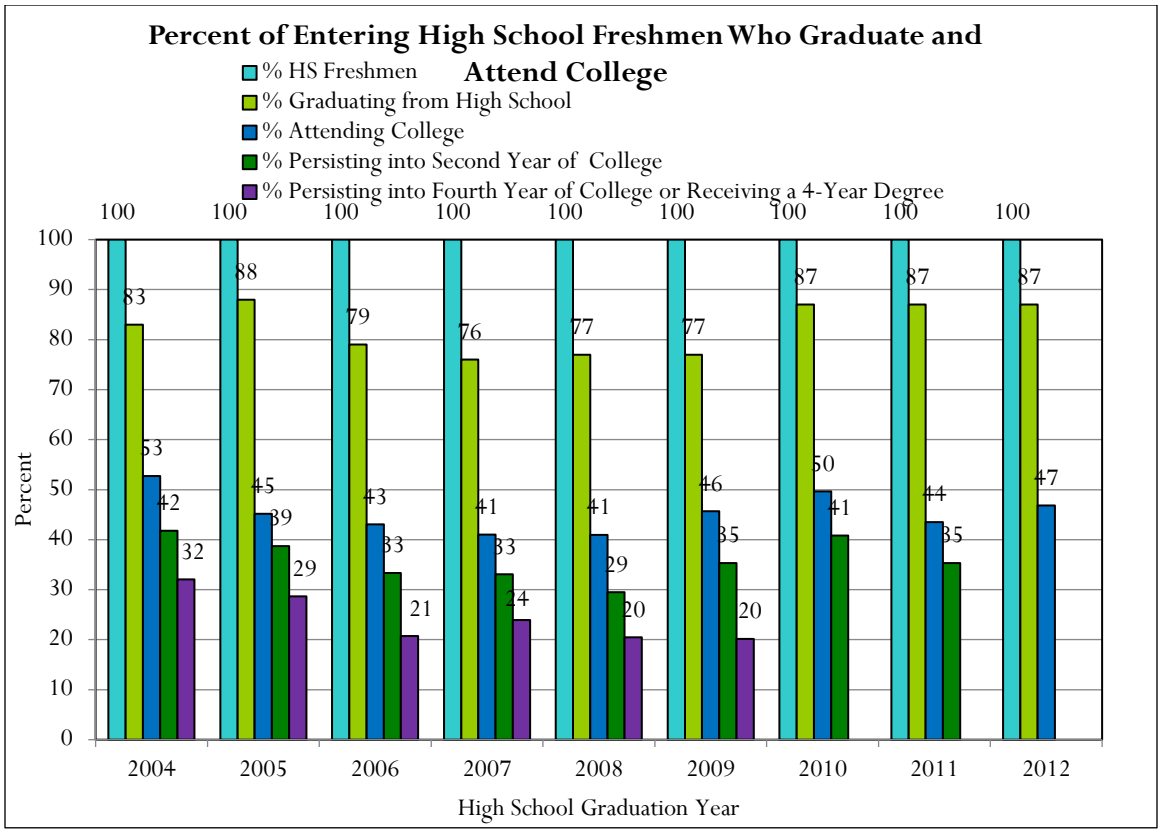


Figure 19. Percent of Students Who Attend College and Persist into Year 4

*Note: The adjusted 4-year cohort graduation rate is used for 2011 and 2012, while the other years use the Estimated On-Time Graduation Rate.

The percentage of students attending college any time after graduating from high school is depicted in Figure 19. For example, within the 2004 graduating class, approximately 75% attended college any time after graduating from high school. This is an 11 percentage-point increase from the college direct rates shown in Figure 4.

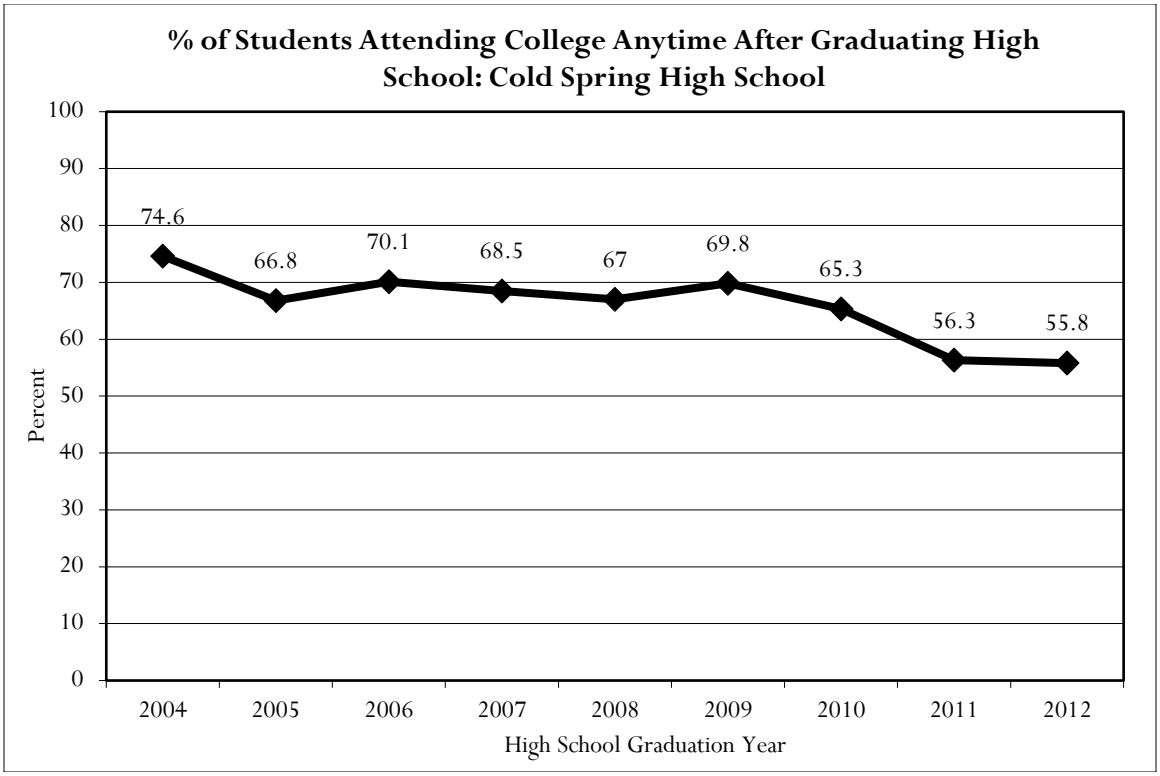


Figure 20. Percent of Students Who Attend College Anytime After Graduating from High School

Table 1 shows the two- and four-year college graduation rates. This details the percent of students from the class of 2004 through 2010 who received a college degree.

Table 1. Percent of Students Receiving and Two or Four-Year Degree

Graduating Class	% Receiving a Two – Year Degree	% Receiving a Four – Year Degree
2004	29.4%	24.9%
2005	16.1%	23.3%
2006	26.2%	19.8%
2007	21.0%	19.5%
2008	15.4%	9.6%
2009	20.3%	
2010	12.2%	

Researchers also analyzed college degree attainment for Cold Spring High School graduates from 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 receiving four-year college degrees. More specifically, researchers coded the degree names and/or CIP (Classification of Instructional Programs) codes into STEM degree or not STEM degree. Figure 19 shows

the percentages of four-year college graduates from Cold Spring receiving a STEM degree.[3] These data indicate an increasing percentage of graduates receiving STEM-related degrees from 2006 to 2008. This data should be interpreted cautiously due to the small sample size for each graduating year.

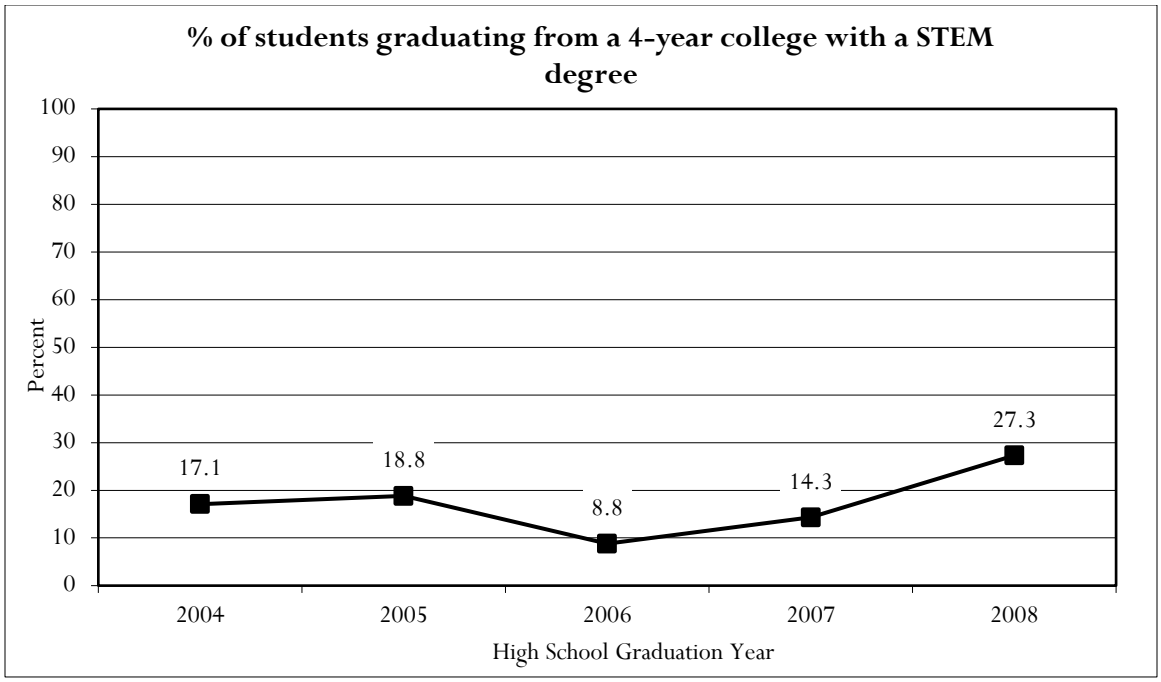


Figure 19. **Percentage of Students Graduating from a 4-year College with a STEM Degree – 2004-2008**

[3] Data only includes students that graduated from a four-year college who have a degree name and/or degree CIP Code. Researchers used the CIP Codes listed by http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/stem-list.pdf to determine if CIP Code qualified as STEM-related. Researchers were not able to include two-year colleges because often they do not use CIP Codes and degree names are general.

SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE

This section of the report summarizes findings from interviews, focus groups, surveys, and classroom observation study.

Rubric Results

Researchers organized the rubric results around the Student and School Success Principles. These include principles described in federal guidance for ESEA Flexibility Requests and an additional principle that specifically addresses culturally competent practices. Together, these principles provide a roadmap to improve school performance. They also align with and expand upon OSPI's Nine Characteristics of High-Performing Schools (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). Principles include:

Provide strong leadership;
Ensure teachers are effective and able to improve instruction;
Increase learning time;
Strengthen the school's instructional program;
Use data to inform instruction;
Establish a safe and supportive school environment;
Engage families and community; and
Build and sustain equitable and culturally competent systems and practices for all students.

Principles are numbered to support school teams in their dialogues and in writing their school improvement plans. However, *there is no hierarchy among the principles*, that is, each must be fully and effectively implemented in order to improve schools.

Researchers used data collected through the School and Classroom Practices Study, which is described in the Methodology section to reach consensus on scores for 16 Indicators organized around the Student and School Success Principles. Researchers scored each Indicator using a rubric with a continuum of four levels that describe the degree to which a school is effectively implementing the Indicator. The four levels are:

4 – Leads to continuous improvement and institutionalization
3 – Leads to effective implementation
2 – Initial, beginning, developing
1 – Minimal, absent, or ineffective

Indicators with a score of a 3 or above represent strengths in the school, and Indicators with a score of 2 or below warrant attention. The ultimate goal is to reach a 4, which leads to continuous improvement and institutionalization. Table 2 shows the mean results from the School and Classroom Practices Study, and Figure 20 shows the number of schools receiving each rubric score by indicator.

Table 2.
Indicator Scores for the Turnaround Principles

Indicators	**Avg. Rubric Score 2013**
Provide Strong Leadership	
Clear and Shared Focus – Student Learning	**2.7**
Attributes of Effective School Leadership	**2. 7**
Distributed Leadership	**2.7**
Ensure Teachers are Effective and Able to Improve Instruction	
Capacity Building	**2.5**
Focused Professional Development	**2.2**
Increase Learning Time	
Extended Learning Time for Adults and Students	**2**
Strengthen the School's Instructional Program	
Standards-Aligned Curriculum	**2.5**
High Quality Instruction	**2**
Use Data to Inform Instruction and for Continuous Improvement	
Standards Aligned Assessment System	**2.7**
Supporting Students in Need	**2.7**
Establish a Safe and Supportive School Environment	
Safe and Orderly Environment	**2.8**
Building Relationships	**3.0**
Engage Family and Community	
Family Communication	**2.8**
Family & Community Engagement	**3.0**
Build and Sustain Equitable and Culturally Competent Systems and Policies for All Students	
Culturally Competent System	**2.2**
High Expectations	**2.7**

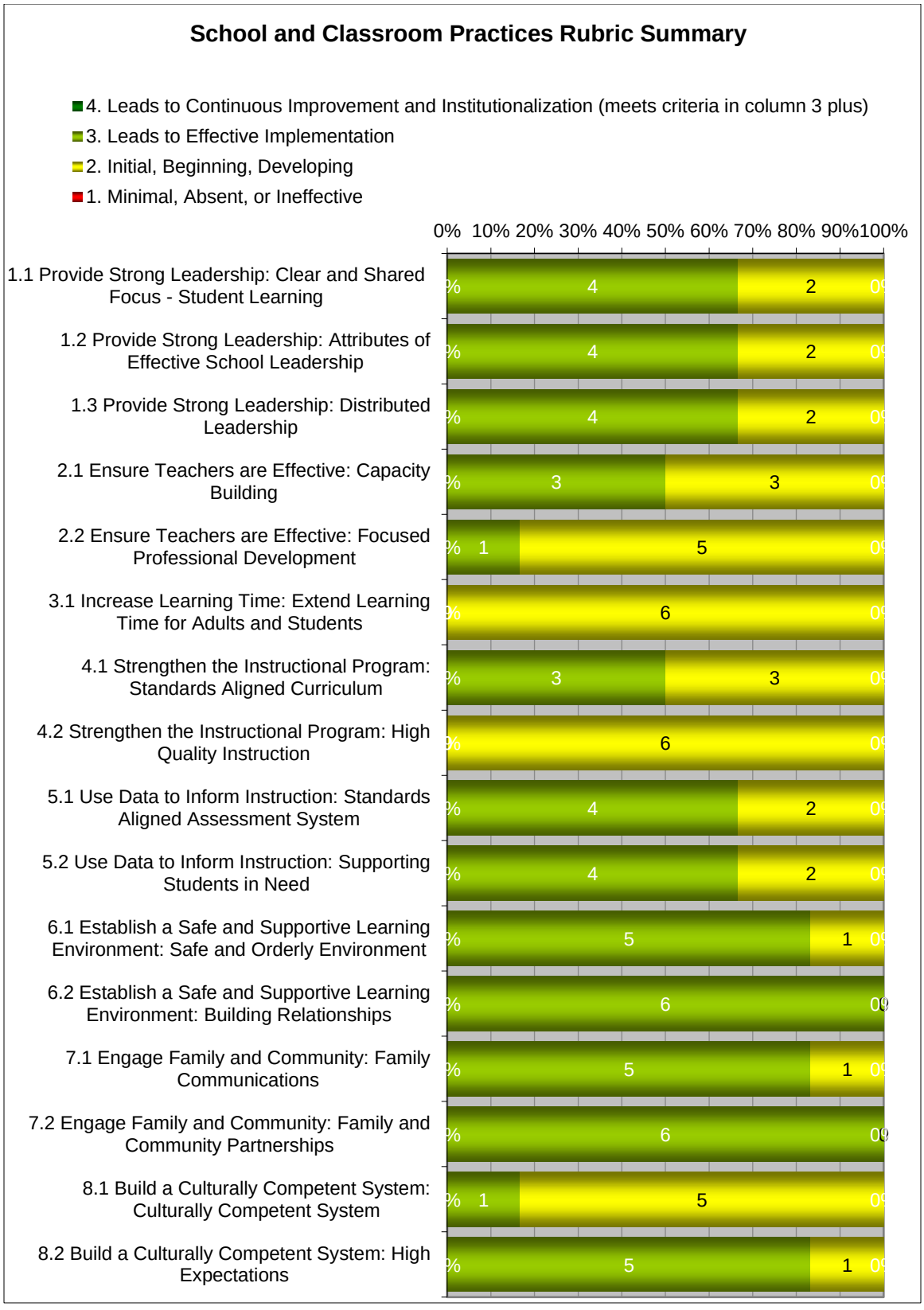


Figure 20. School and Classroom Practices Study-Synthesis Finding survey Results

Cold Spring School District staff members, students, and parents also completed a survey designed to measure whether they see evidence of the *Student and School Success Principles* in the school. The survey includes items organized around each of the *Principles*. Individual survey items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral/undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). Researchers consider a "4" or "5" response on an individual survey item a positive response. Likewise, an overall factor score of 4.0 and above is a positive response.

A summary of the survey findings appears in Figure 21. Overall results fell into the moderately high to high range. The Cold Spring staff members scored the *Establish Safe and Supportive Learning Environment* (4.33) factor the highest and *Build and Sustain a Culturally Competent System* (3.73) and *Use Data to Inform Instruction* (3.74) factors the lowest. Similarly, parents rated the *Establish a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment* (4.05) factor the highest and *Use Data to Inform Instruction* (3.82) and *Provide Strong Leadership* (3.83) factors the lowest. Students' responses showed very little variation, with all scores in the moderately high range. Individual item results are available in Appendices A through C.

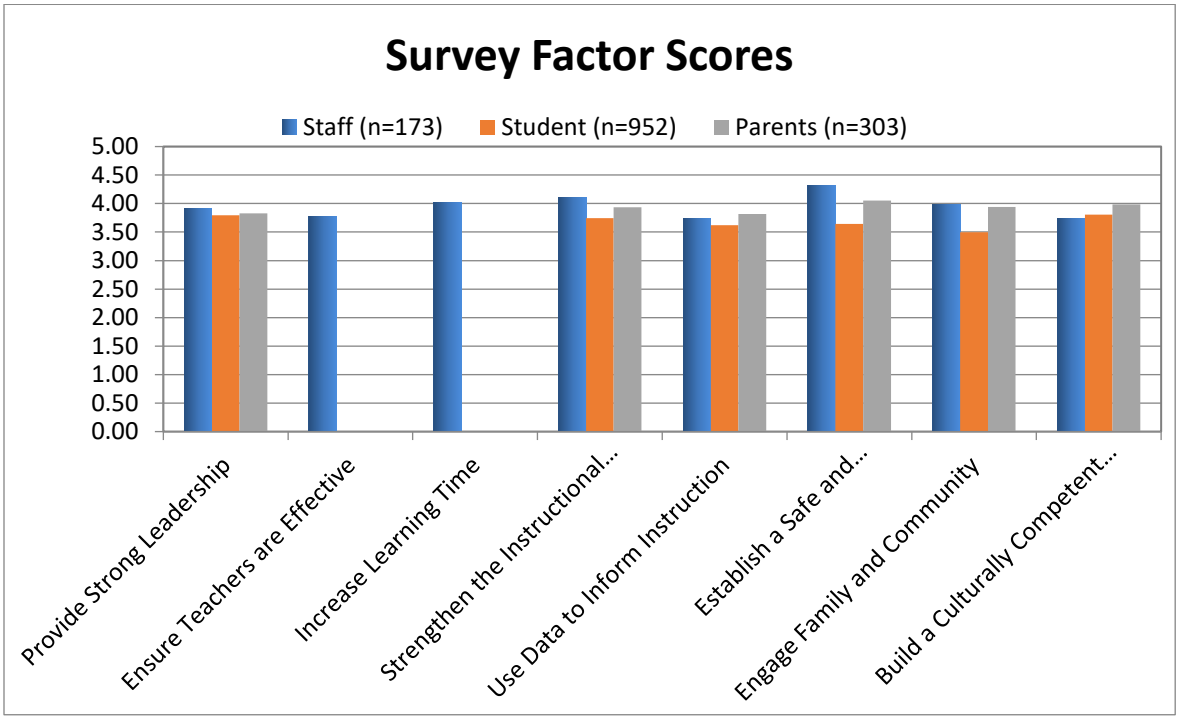


Figure 21. Survey Factor Scores

Provide Strong Leadership

Student and School Success Principle	Rubric Score 2013
Provide Strong Leadership	
Clear and Shared Focus – Student Learning	2.7
Attributes of Effective School Leadership	2.7
Distributed Leadership	2.7

Clear and Shared Focus – Student Learning

When asked to describe their school's mission and vision, many staff members had difficulty identifying the official mission statement printed on their websites and other materials. This indicates staff members tend to view these statements as formalities rather than living documents that guide decision-making. Instead, staff members were more likely to summarize what they saw of the gist of their mission statements. Responses ranged from "college and career readiness" to "the mission is to get kids ready for life," to "our main focus is to improve test scores, if you get right down to it." In one school, though teachers struggled to remember their "official" mission statement, several were able to repeat a catchphrase amongst the staff – "Know what your kids know." At one school, a staff member remarked on the lack of school-wide clarity around a shared mission:

For some, the mission is "come to school, don't drop out." [For] some [the mission] is "pass the MSP." Other [staff] have a higher bar, [saying,] "be a good citizen." It would go a long way if we were on the same page, if we understood it as our role to produce good citizens. It would go a long way to create continuity in the school.

Despite the wide range of responses, 91.6% of staff survey respondents district-wide agree or strongly agree their school's mission or goals focus on improving student learning, and 88.1% agree or strongly agree their school's mission statement focuses on raising the bar for all students and closing the achievement gap. These numbers indicate that most staff members in the district have a sense that a shared vision is guiding work at their school, although they may not be able to articulate it.

Staff members showed more similarities in their responses when asked to name initiatives in their building. At the elementary level, staff members described the adoption of new curriculum, while at the secondary level, staff members mentioned STEM. At all levels, staff members spoke of TPEP and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Several staff members across multiple buildings spoke of feeling overwhelmed or anxious about the number of new initiatives and the amount of work that came with them. "Everyone's trying, but it's so much," one staff member said. One administrator explained their efforts, saying:

The catch is, we are trying to work on how to make all of these things tie together, to marry them together. We want to keep teachers motivated and not give them `just one more thing to do.' It's hard, it's a push to make it all practical. We are taking it all in

district wide. . . trying to figure out what to move towards, how to introduce teachers [to new concepts] and considering how they might be feeling through it all.

A smaller majority of survey respondents (72.7%) agree or strongly agree their school allocates resources in alignment with school improvement goals, which was consistent with focus group findings. Although some staff members said resources were allocated appropriately "in most cases," others raised concerns. Some staff members worried that resource allocation favored the highest-performing students – those most likely to take STEM courses in high school. One staff member explained, "We are really excited about STEM and our advanced and average students have some incredible opportunities. We want to make sure that all kids have opportunities like this." Other staff members reported being dissatisfied with the allocation of technology resources in their building. The issue of technology is explored further in the Budget and Resources section of this report.

Attributes of Effective School Leadership

For the most part, staff members spoke positively about their principals. At multiple buildings, staff members emphasized that their principals "trusted them as professionals" and didn't "micromanage." As one staff member stated, "We have a lot of control in our own classroom . . . [building administrators] trust me to do what is inside of my standards." At these schools, staff members were more likely to say their principals supported risk taking and thinking outside the box. One administrator commented further about supporting staff members to take risks:

I am intentional about it, but when somebody does something, I tend to support it and let him or her run with it. I push for that and then I do not make [a statement of] this is what we are going to do. I let them share it rather than jumping on something, then it appears top-down. [I want to] get the buy in.

Although several staff members appreciated the autonomy and support, others indicated this approach does not give teachers the instructional leadership they need. At one school, a staff member reported, "[The principal] is not an instructional leader; he just doesn't have the time. He trusts us." A staff member at another school said:

[Administrators] don't mess with us as far as how we teach or how we do it. I think they are so hands-off that it can become a hindrance. They have no clue what happens in our room. I rarely see either one of them in our room, if so, it's only for fifteen minutes or so and that doesn't give them a good idea of what is really going on.

Survey results indicated 69.4% of staff members agreed or strongly agreed school leaders ensure instructional and organizational systems are regularly monitored and modified to support student performance, while 64.3% agreed or strongly agreed the principal systematically engages faculty and staff in discussions about current research on teaching and learning.

In general, staff members at the elementary schools tended to report more frequent informal classroom observations or walk-throughs than their colleagues at the secondary level did. At the secondary level, teachers and administrators were more likely to speak of the struggle of making it into classrooms regularly. At Green Hill, the principal shared the difficulties of conducting impromptu classroom observations when an administrative presence tends to distract that unique population of students. “It is so disruptive for me to walk into a classroom. Usually, it's in and out. It's not that I don't want to see what [the teachers] are doing. For that knowledge, the class is disrupted for the whole period.”

According to survey results, 74.9% of staff members agree or strongly agree administrators recruit a diverse and highly-qualified staff. However, during focus group interviews, some staff members raised concerns in this area. One focus group respondent said:

[The] diversity of staff does not match the diversity of the student body. We have one minority teacher with over 50% minority student population. [We have] tried to talk to the district, we have to have some kind of a minority representation. [There is] only one or two [minority teachers] in each building.

Focus group interviews indicated that celebrating success was more prominent at some schools than others. At one school, an interviewee said, "Successes are celebrated as a whole group. We talk about the progress we've made at staff meetings. We also have ongoing conversations where we point out what kids have achieved and how can we improve." At other schools, celebrations were not as built into the culture. Staff members at some schools felt the need for more recognition, either individually or for the entire staff. One staff member said, "Birthdays are recognized, and [the principal] does share good things that people are doing, but that information is only shared to a few people."

Focus group respondents from multiple stakeholder groups spoke positively about the district administration, with many respondents identifying the new superintendent as a positive change. Speaking of the new superintendent, a union representative shared, “He was hired in July and he came to every classroom in Cold Spring to introduce himself.” Teachers noted more effective communication from the district office and increased opportunities to participate in distributed leadership via committees.

Distributed Leadership

Focus group interviews indicated that staff input into decision-making varied from school to school. At some schools, teachers described their school’s decision making process as “collaborative.” As a staff member at one such school shared:

It's a real team environment; we make decisions collaboratively. We have a lot of discussion time to talk about discipline and how to offer family support. We have a set time every other Tuesday to discuss students of concern, but also `when you have a minute' time. If we have an issue, we find a way to get together on that day to solve the issue. It's a team effort all day, every day.

However, at other schools, staff members perceived a more top-down decision making style. As a staff member at one of these schools explained:

We have team leaders but they don't ask me any questions. Decisions are made in the office by one person usually. My team leader hasn't talked to me once. Major decisions were made without any input from us at all.

A staff member at another school said, "As classroom teachers, we feel like a lot of decisions about our kids are made without our input. It's top down. It would be nice to have more input." At this school, specialists and classified staff members described a lack of opportunities to participate in the decision-making process. At another school, focus group respondents indicated that classified staff members typically do not attend the staff meetings where decisions tend to be made because they occur outside of their contract hours.

Focus group respondents indicated that, though most of the schools have leadership teams, big decisions tend to get brought to the whole staff. "The deeper the issue, the more input we get," said one teacher, a sentiment that was echoed across buildings. When asked about how the leadership team functions, a staff member at another school explained:

No decisions are strictly made by the [leadership] team, instead, they bring information back to the grade level teams, and then a decision is made. There have only been one or two meetings so far, but we believe this will work better than other methods in the past

According to survey results, 52.2% of staff members agree or strongly agree that a clear and collaborative decision-making process is used to select individuals for leadership roles within their buildings – the lowest number for any survey question in this section. One administrator commented:

We do not have a huge staff; we are intentional that we are all part of the team instead of a select few that run the meetings. We are all part of this team. Within that, there are leaders. No one is on a pedestal and that is what I have heard teachers like.

When asked how leaders are assigned, one staff member stated, "We all have an opportunity to be on the leadership team." Another at the same school said, "We've talked about having a rotation so anyone who wants to be part of the team can be.

Researchers found limited evidence of parent or student input into the decision-making process at the schools. One staff member told researchers about big changes in student empowerment happening at the high school over the last several years, and how students are really driving some decisions, whereas "before it was an adult telling them what to do." W.F. Wood students did report that they can provide feedback and are asked about certain things, but told researchers that they typically "have to seek out administrators rather than the other way around," and that it doesn't really "go out to the whole student

body." No schools appeared to give parents significant opportunities for input into decision-making.

Ensure Teachers are Effective and Able to Improve Instruction

Student and School Success Principle	Rubric Score 2013
Ensure Teachers are Effective and Able to Improve Instruction	
Capacity Building	2.5
Focused Professional Development	2.2

Capacity Building

This is the second year Cold Spring is participating in the Teacher/Principal Evaluation Project (TPEP), using an evaluation rubric based around the Five Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (5D) from the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership (CEL). Half of the teachers in the district are being evaluated using the 5D rubric. These staff members were chosen on a volunteer basis. Next year, all teachers in the district will be evaluated by new evaluation system. According to union representatives, teachers who are currently being evaluated using the old rubric will partner with teachers who have piloted the new 5D rubric.

Focus group interviews with union and district representatives indicated some aspects of the TPEP rollout presented a challenge. A district official acknowledged, "The teacher evaluation is far ahead of the principal evaluation." In addition, there has been some confusion as to how to apply the new rubric to special education teachers who are not classroom-based. When asked about the new evaluation system, union representatives said they were working "to layer in in the teacher voice, the collaborative climate, and the support needed for growth, mentorship, and make it a growth model as opposed to a punitive model." One union representative said:

It is a big change in a lot of ways, but most of us think it is the way to go. People don't like the old evaluation model, the new evaluation means we have to keep more records, show students growth, and that a detailed conversation that has to take place.

"It gives [teachers] vocabulary and language for what they were doing," a union official said of the new evaluation system. Both union representatives and district officials described the relationship between the union and the district as collaborative.

At Green Hill, the principal described meeting with CEL staff members to identify ways to apply the rubric to their unique needs. The principal explained:

One of the really fantastic things about working about the people at the University of Washington is that they said there are parts [of the framework] that won't work where you work. There are things about where we are that will make us be 3's and 4's in some [other] areas. The structure of this place is such that you can't be a 2.

Some focus group respondents mentioned walk-throughs as one method administrators use to hold teachers accountable to high standards. As mentioned in the *Attributes of Effective Leadership* section, non-evaluative walkthroughs appear to occur more frequently at the elementary level than the secondary level. Although staff members acknowledged that administrators are "being pulled in so many different directions," some expressed a desire for more frequent classroom observations. "I think it would build continuity if they were in classrooms and observing," explained one educator. "They would see some inconsistencies across classrooms. It would help as far as discipline was concerned, as far as our instructional practices; it would go a long way." Even for administrators who regularly conduct walk-throughs, it appears the process for leaving feedback is informal. The principal at one school said:

I do not have an established walk-though system with paper feedback. Mostly, it's visiting and getting to know the kids. The teachers are very open to having us in the classroom; they want us in the classroom all the time. I feel that I'm in and out a lot. It helps us when we are working with kids, and parents, can say 'I've seen this and this and this.' As far as feedback, it's usually a questioning sort of way. I may ask, "What is going on?"

Survey data show 69.1% of staff members agree or strongly agree administrators regularly visit classrooms to observe instruction, 78.4% agree or strongly agree administrators hold staff accountable for improving student learning, 82.7% agree or strongly agree administrators expect high-quality work from adults who work at their school, and 77% agree or strongly agree they have an evaluation process that helps staff improve their process. Despite the strong survey scores, focus group respondents had mixed answers when asked how their principals hold staff members accountable for meeting high standards.

At one school, some staff members listed chronic tardiness, holding "unprofessional standards" and "inappropriate dress" as examples of staff members not being held to high standards. Other staff members felt they were held accountable. As described in the *Attributes of Effective Leadership* section, several focus group respondents indicated their principals trusted them to maintain professional standards. One focus group participant discussed how increased communication around expectations, paired with opportunities for praise and criticism could help to raise the level of accountability in the building:

I would like to see more accountability. We need a plan in place. Not just a punishing [plan], but an improvement, one that finds the positive in the things. Everything needs positive affirmation and constructive criticism. I don't think there is either [positive or negative]. People want to hear how they are doing, good and bad – they want the feedback.

A few focus group respondents mentioned data as a form of accountability. One staff member reported, "We put a lot of emphasis on test scores. [Administrators] get data out to the departments. So for example, we found that reading went down and talked about our plan on how to increase those scores." However, reports on data usage in this manner

were mixed even in the same school. For example, a staff member at one school said, "I feel like [the principal] holds us accountable very well; She looks at our assessment scores, evaluations, parent feedback..." However, at the same school, another staff member said, "I'm not sure what happens when scores don't progress."

Focused Professional Development

Across the district, staff members reported engaging in a number of professional development (PD)offerings, including trainings on the new language arts and math curricula, CCSS, and CEL 5D. One principal explained, "If somebody has a desire to go to something, we have some contractual money we have to spend on professional development and that has to be spent by the committee. Their constraints are really tight about what they can fund." One teacher said, "I've had good success in the past... My experience has been if I can justify it, I can go. There are some problems with communicating to people what funds are available and how to go." However, another teacher at the same school said, "There's not that much money budgeted for [PD]. If you can do one or two for the whole year, you're doing pretty well." Of the staff members surveyed, 66.9% agreed the school has a long-term plan that provides ongoing and focused PD to support the school's mission and goals, 61.5% agreed PD opportunities offered by their school and district are directly relevant to staff needs, and 57.9% agreed PD activities are sustained by ongoing follow-up and support.

At each school, a staff development team coordinates staff developmental goals and facilitates the appropriate use of staff development funds to support the goals. As one staff member explained, "Staff members can make a request to go to a training, and the leadership team evaluates the request. They can turn down our request if it doesn't meet the goals and criteria for the school." Staff members indicated teachers attend individual trainings with the expectation that they will share their learning with the rest of the staff. However, there does not appear to be a systemic method of ensuring this sharing takes place. At one school, staff members suggested this opportunity is rarely made available or "not the same as going through the experience yourself." One teacher explained:

I went to a conference last year and I learned really cool stuff. I wanted to share [findings] with staff, but I was never given the chance. It would help us all to learn, and would be a good way to recognize us as teachers if we were able to share what we learn.

PD activities appear to be largely chosen by these staff development teams, with input from the district in regard to ongoing initiatives such as TPEP or CCSS. According to one principal, "The staff development committee meets and looks at the things we want to build on, then we decide whether or not we should utilize in-house expertise." A staff member said, "The professional development is somewhat unstructured, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. It's flexible and the money is invested in the whole staff instead of just one person." Administrators appeared to use an informal system to measure the effectiveness of PD. The administrator explained:

We talk to staff members about where they are. We have benchmarks, and teams talk to each other. I look at results of classrooms and the school over all. We don't have a data board that shows that, but as far as data, we are getting more versed in it.

Several classified employees indicated they would like more professional development. “Training is not extended to us very often. I think we should be able to go to the trainings on Journeys. We are teaching it, but we haven't been trained," one classified staff member shared. At another school, staff members reported that classified staff members were “welcome” to attend trainings, but that they were unpaid.

Several focus group respondents indicated needing more training in the CCSS, especially. At one school, most focus group participants reported that CCSS training did not occur frequently enough to have a good grasp of the standards and is not job-embedded or supplemented with adequate follow-up support. One person shared, "Our collective awareness of Common Core is very low. We had a couple half days of training last year, and that's all that we've done as a group. I've done a lot on my own, but I'm the exception, not the rule." Green Hill teachers were particularly concerned about the lack of regularly scheduled professional development concerning assault response, de-escalation, or self-defense.

Increase Learning Time

Student and School Success Principle	**Rubric Score 2013**
Increase Learning Time	
Extended Learning Time for Adults and Students	2

Extended Learning Time for Adults and Students

Adults. This was one of the lowest sections on the rubric, with every school scoring a 2. Limited extended learning time for adults was the largest factor behind the relatively low scores. According to focus group interviews, the district provides two half-day trainings a year, in addition to seven early release days for teacher collaboration. Aside from these times, there are few opportunities district-wide for teachers to meet as grade-level or department teams. Several teachers expressed frustration about their limited opportunities for collaboration, which one teacher referred to as "the biggest barrier." Survey data indicate 77.8% of staff members agree they engage in collaborative professional learning activities focused on improving teaching and learning. Only 42.2% of staff members agree teachers collaboratively review student work.

Though many focus group respondents indicated they made an effort to collaborate with peers, these meetings tended to take place before or after school, or during lunch breaks or shared planning periods. Aside from the seven early release days a year, there is no regular collaboration time built into the district schedule to facilitate meeting as professional learning communities. Even at schools where department or grade-level

meetings occur frequently, they appear to be semi-voluntary. As one staff member described, "We don't have time to meet and collaborate. We meet on our lunch once a week, and it's semi-voluntary. You get clock hours. That's the only opportunity we have on a regular basis." A teacher at another school corroborated this account, saying, “A lot of our communication is in the teacher’s lounge.”

This limited extended learning time for adults is, in part, responsible for relatively low scores in the *Focused Professional Development* and *High Quality Instruction* sections of this report, as well. Without regular opportunities to collaboratively plan lessons using intentional strategies, to reflect on their instruction, or to process and apply material learned in trainings, teachers are left struggling to undertake this work on their own. As one focus group respondent explained, “We don't have focused time to talk education." At another school, a staff member shared, "One of my biggest frustrations is the lack of collaboration. There are no teeth in what we are expected to do, there is no accountability." Others wondered whether their department was even interested in collaboration. One person said, "Within our building my department does not get together at all. My assumption is that people don't want to." However, another person in the same building shared, "We would do it if we had more time. We really need time to work on the overall curriculum for the middle or at-risk population. We also need to work on pacing." One person shared:

I feel like we are all islands unto ourselves. I can monitor and adjust what I do, but we do not communicate as a department. We don't talk about student learning ever, and we don't talk about teaching. We just don't.

When opportunities for teacher collaboration do arrive, they do not appear to regularly include classified staff at any school. At one school, the educational assistants felt the need for more collaboration saying, "There is not a whole lot of time for us to talk to teachers prior to going into their classrooms. Teachers wish they had more time to talk to us."

Researchers found no evidence of regular opportunities for peer observation or learning walks in any of the schools. One person voiced their interest in the chance to observe their peers, saying, "I'd like to do it. It would be fun to see what others are doing. We teach in isolation, and it would be great to learn from each other's teaching styles." At other schools, staff members explained that their principals were open to teachers observing each other, but that people typically did not take advantage of that opportunity. Survey results indicated only 49.6% of staff members agreed teachers invite their colleagues into their classrooms to observe instruction.

Students. The schedules at most schools appear to accommodate extended learning time for students who need extra help in the core subjects. Survey results show 82% of staff members agree their school maximizes time for student learning. At the elementary level, tiered skill-based reading groups had recently been implemented, though this had occurred too recently for researchers to gauge the effect the extra time was having. At one school, an administrator explained they were planning a similar program for math.

There is currently no before or after school tutoring available at the elementary level, although one staff member indicated this was available in the community, at the YMCA. In addition, Cascade Elementary moved from a half-day to a full-day kindergarten.

The middle and high school are using a combination of CORE Flex time to support students in danger of failing their classes. Students with failing grades are identified to participate in the CORE program where they work with core teachers to receive extra support for 20 minutes a day (30 at the high school), four days a week. CORE students are required to attend the program for a month and can be dismissed for the following month if they raise their grade to a C or higher. Students who maintain grades at the C level or above are eligible for the Flex program and can engage in activities such as movies, time in the gym, board games, or study time. When asked how well this model is working, staff member responses varied. "CORE is one of the coolest things we are doing," shared one building representative, "We encourage kids to go to CORE if they need a quiet place to just sit and think. It's not punishment, but a time to get work done, to study, and to get some support." Another staff member countered, saying:

I love the idea that we are helping students that need extra help, but I have a problem wasting education time for students who are high achievers with games and movies. It's a total waste of educational time. Instead of watching movie, what about if they learn something academically. Maybe not treat it so academically, but have them accidentally learn something? As a staff, I think we're smart enough to come up with something where the students can learn something interesting rather than watch movies and [listen to] music.

Opportunities for enrichment appeared limited at the elementary level. One staff member explained, "We used to have a full time gifted program teacher, but with all the funding issues that job was eliminated." Another staff member added, "There are outside sources, but none in the school. That would be an excellent thing to reinstate." At the middle school, students can choose electives from art and music classes. At the high school, the STEM program offers a wide range of elective options, such as robotics or molecular genetics. Cold Spring students also have access to a diverse set of clubs. Some of the enrichment opportunities mentioned by staff included pottery, Forensic Team, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), and Knowledge Bowl. “For our size, we are lucky to have the things we offer,” said one teacher. The vocational programs at Green Hill include auto mechanics, cabling, computer technology, welding, and music production. Additionally, students who excel in their studies can take college courses through Evergreen State College. One staff member said, "We are also proud of the fact that we provide students with employable skills, beyond just the regular school curriculum...We want to help our students have the skills necessary to get jobs when they leave our facility."

Strengthen the School’s Instructional Program

Student and School Success Principle	**Rubric Score 2013**

Strengthen the School's Instructional Program	
Standards-Aligned Curriculum	2.5
High Quality Instruction	2.0

Standards-Aligned Curriculum

At the elementary level, teachers are using the recently adopted district reading (Houghton Mifflin *Journeys*) and math (*Math Connects)* curricula. Staff members indicated the reading curriculum was aligned with CCSS, but that the math curriculum still needed work. As one elementary teacher explained:

The reading curriculum is completely aligned. Math is pretty close, but we use a math supplement that hits places where the curriculum is lacking. I don't know if it's perfect, but we are getting there. It is in all of our minds to get things up to Common Core standards.

Aside from the core subjects, some elementary teachers raised concerns about "inadequate" social studies and science curricula. The schools have recently purchased science kits, but teachers indicate they have yet to determine how well the new materials align with the standards. As for social studies, one staff member noted, "The books we do have available are probably 30 years old." Another staff member mentioned social studies curriculum would be replaced soon. Other staff members were concerned about the lack of opportunities for elementary students to participate in art. As one described:

Research says art is significant, and I feel as if the powers that be have made it impossible for students to do it. It breaks my heart. We were even told we couldn't do water color painting because it doesn't fit with Common Core.

Familiarizing themselves with the new curriculum has taken up a lot of the staff's time, thus staff members seem to rely heavily on the alignment and mapping already built into the curriculum. At one elementary school, a teacher explained, "We haven't sat down as a group for any type of mapping because it's mapped out in the curriculum. You can spend so much time mapping, but I would rather teach."

Middle school teachers also indicated their new language arts curriculum is aligned to the CCSS, while curricula for other subjects, such as social studies, are still aligned to the EALRs. Teachers working with curricula that is not adapted to CCSS report having "a big work load" as they need to supplement material to guarantee it is standards-based. According to some focus group members, the math curricula at the middle school "is not even sort of aligned" to CCSS, but the math department educators work together to supplement materials to ensure students are engaging in rigorous work. Math teachers work with a coach to create standards based, "hands on lesson plans that get the kids involved." One staff member explained, "First the test was MSP (Measurement of Student Progress), now it's changing to Smarter Balance. [District personnel] want to wait until the dust settles [before adopting new math curricula]." According to staff members at the middle school, the science curriculum is stronger, with teachers having access to a CCSS-based Scope and Sequence document that aids in alignment.

At the high school, staff members acknowledged the transition to the CCSS was still in the early stages, and that some departments were ahead of others. One school leader reported:

We are in the early steps of rolling out Common Core. Most of our work thus far has been in the math department. Our English department has done some work with them as well. So far we have had a couple of trainings.

Some of the departments are at the point of aligning their lessons and assessments with the CCSS, but this work appears to be in the very early stages and limited to a few departments. For example, the science department talked about spending time on the Next Generation Science Standards and developing the curriculum in biology to align with the standards. According to one science teacher, "We plan everything together and do common assessments." A math teacher talked about the algebra teachers working together to align their curriculum and pacing, but reported "beyond that it is inconsistent."

At Green Hill, CCSS-alignment was similarly in the early stages. Focus group respondents noted two difficulties with the ongoing CCSS-alignment. First, the school uses a variety of different curricula to support the needs of its students. These differ widely in terms of quality. In focus groups, some teachers reported that they were currently teaching with outdated materials, whereas others reported that they have received the latest curriculum. Second, some teachers reported that they lack the time and resources to learn the CCSS. One teacher said, "They should print out the Common Core Standards and compare it [to the curriculum] so that we can tell where it's weak."

Of the staff members surveyed, the vast majority (90.3%) agreed their school's curriculum was aligned to the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), although this does not indicate alignment to CCSS. A slightly smaller majority (88%) agreed teachers had a good understanding of standards in the areas in which they teach. The relative newness of the CCSS may account for this lower number.

Survey data reveal most (84.7%) of staff members agreed curriculum was aligned horizontally (within grade levels) at their schools, while a smaller percentage (72.7%) agreed curriculum was aligned vertically (across grade levels). These numbers are fairly consistent with focus group findings. At one school, a staff member said, "Horizontally, we do a great job as a team, making time for it. But as far as vertical alignment, there's not much collaboration." Even in the elementary buildings, where there are only two grades, staff members reported limited opportunities to meet across grade levels for vertical alignment. These opportunities appeared even more limited between buildings. A Cascade Elementary teacher, for instance, commented, "In the district I feel very supported, but I would like to have conversations with other grade levels. We are just pre K-1 [it is] hard to get a picture for what students are doing in other building and what are the expectations." Similarly, a high school teacher reported, "There is not a lot of dialogue between us and the middle school. For example, they teach life science in eighth

grade and then we teach it again in high school. We are sort of butting heads on the sequence." Some teachers expressed hope that the new curricula adoptions would improve vertical articulation in the district.

Staff reactions were mixed when asked whether instructional materials gave students a chance to analyze, synthesize, or evaluate information, although 86% of survey respondents agreed instructional strategies emphasize higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, 79% of parents agree school work challenges their students to solve problems. Some staff member said the *Journeys* curriculum allowed students to use "thinking maps," "graphic organizers," and "work in groups." Some elementary teachers said the new curricula challenges students at a higher level than the old curricula did. Teachers also mentioned liking the differentiated instructional strategies the *Journeys* curriculum provides for English language learners. However, other staff members voiced concerns that students are "missing opportunities to make connections before opening the book" and are not participating in "discovery learning." When asked whether they perform these tasks in most of their classrooms, Cold Spring students reported, "We do a lot of evaluation, but a lot of us are doing that in our advanced classes. It seems like a daily routine in those classes." District-wide classroom observation data indicate researchers found evidence of students constructing knowledge and/or manipulating information and ideas to build on prior learning, to discover new meaning, and to develop conceptual understanding, not just recall, in only 37% of the classrooms observed. Similarly, researchers found evidence of students demonstrating verbally or in writing that they were intentionally reflecting on their learning (including evaluating their own work or others') in only 28% of classrooms.

When asked how the administration monitors the fidelity of implementation of curriculum and instruction, focus group responses indicated there is little monitoring done by school leaders, as described in the *Attributes of Effective Leaders* section of this report. One staff member said:

I don't think the administration monitors the fidelity of our curriculum at all. There's no real follow up. They don't attend department meetings or check-in with us. I would love to have them take a look at my curriculum and give me some feedback.

High Quality Instruction

This was one of the lowest-scoring areas on the rubric, with all schools scoring a 2. As a whole, survey results in this section tended to be higher than focus group and classroom observation data indicated. For example, 81% of staff survey respondents agreed their building's staff shared a common understanding of what constitutes effective instruction. Focus group interviews, on the other hand, indicated that training around the CEL 5D instructional framework (as opposed to the CEL5D evaluation rubric) was inconsistent. While CEL 5D introduced a new shared vocabulary in terms of instruction to the district, many staff members were still gaining a common awareness of research-based instructional strategies and had yet to make the transition to common practice. As one staff member described, "The TPEP lends itself to common understanding [of effective

practices]. We are getting there. Those discussions about good teaching practices will occur."

Similarly, 79.5% of staff members surveyed agreed teachers differentiate instruction to accommodate diverse learners, various learning styles, and multiple intelligences. However, researchers only found clear evidence of differentiation in 45% of classrooms observed. While describing the types of differentiated instruction methods teachers use to accommodate diverse learning needs, some staff members mentioned implementing small groups, peer editing, and text-to-world connections as ways to diversify lessons. However, focus group interviews did not reveal evidence of systemic, intentional, data-based differentiation in most classrooms. Students at one school reported that, in some classes, "if you do not speak up then you just don't get the help you need." One parent of an elementary student shared, "It seems like more differentiated instruction is needed. There isn't a lot of room for achieving students to grow. My [child] isn't being challenged. It's like the mindset is `Since he's meeting grade level expectations, why worry about him.'"

Many staff members were unable to clearly articulate how the CEL 5D framework guides instruction. One staff member shared, “We have adopted 5D, but we have not had a lot of training. We really do not have a common way we plan our lessons, and I do not think there is any agreement on lesson planning.” A building administrator from a different school confirmed that PD on the instructional framework had gotten lost in the midst of other initiatives, saying, “If it calms down, we can do full staff training on the framework. It was our intention to roll it out gradually, not have a Blitzkrieg.” One staff member posited that more frequent observations by administrators and by teachers might lead to more common practices:

I don't think there is a general idea that we all share of what a highly effective teacher is and that we all try to model in our school. It goes back to admin not being in our rooms, [not] holding us accountable to that and us not being in each other's rooms. I think if we could all see how we teach, it would give us all a greater understanding of what an effective teacher looks like. We have teachers who give the book, a worksheet, and expect no talking. Others are hands-on; others don't use the book at all. We have teachers who are new, others who are towards retirement. It's a wide range. It would be great if we could blend together to share with each other, to discuss new ideas and time-tested ideas.

Classroom observations using the STAR Classroom Observation Protocol yielded the following scores on the five Essential Components (3s and 4s combined): *Skills* (51%), *Knowledge* (39%), *Thinking* (24%), *Application* (25%), and *Relationships* (79%). *Thinking* and *Application* both scored in the low range, while *Knowledge* scored in the low-to-moderate range, *Skills* scored in the moderate range, and *Relationships* scored in the high range. These data indicate *Skills* and *Relationships* are relative strengths in the Cold Spring School District.

Use Data to Inform Instruction and for Continuous Improvement

Student and School Success Principle	Rubric Score 2013
Use Data to Inform Instruction and for Continuous Improvement	
Standards Aligned Assessment System	2.7
Supporting Students in Need	2.7

Standards Aligned Assessment System

Staff members reported using a number of common assessments, including Renaissance Learning's STAR reading and mathematics assessments, easyCBM reading fluency and comprehension, curriculum-based unit exams and benchmark tests, Accelerated Reader, Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI), the Washington English Language Proficiency Assessment (WELPA), Classroom Based Assessments (CBA), and the Measurement of Student Progress (MSP)/High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE). One building representative discussed how using such assessments helped department staff members to create goals for their contribution to the School Improvement Plan, saying:

We look at everything. We use the MSP a lot, look at what strands students are doing worse in. We looked at [data] as a team when we went over goals for each department to see where we were failing, where we needed the most help, and what to focus on a little more.

According to survey results, the majority (86.5%) of staff members agree teachers use assessment methods that are ongoing and aligned with core content, but a smaller majority (77.4%) agree school staff use assessment data to plan instructional activities. These numbers indicate that, while teachers are conducting appropriate assessments, they are not necessarily using these data to regularly plan instruction, which is consistent with focus group interviews. One staff member explained, "I think data can be helpful, but we don't know how to use it, and we are not up-to-date on the technology we need to use to access it." All staff members in the Cold Spring School District have access to Homeroom, a data collection site where teachers can compare and analyze student data over time; however, the extent to which staff members utilize this system is unclear to researchers. One staff member said they'd had "zero training" on Homeroom so far.

Researchers could not find any evidence that data was being analyzed by subgroup indicator (e.g., race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, etc.) in order to intentionally develop strategies aimed at closing the achievement gap. Only 37.1% of survey respondents agree school level data is disaggregated by subgroup indicator. Administration at one building commented on the extent to which student academic data are disaggregated, saying, "We identify by special education and ELL students, not [by] gender or discipline. We highlight certain kids but don't make a whole other category."

Less than half (48.3%) of survey respondents agreed staff members receive training on using and interpreting student data. This low percentage is consistent with focus group interviews.

For example, although staff members at one elementary school said they used easyCBM "all the time," there was limited evidence of any training in it. One staff member explained, "I couldn't even talk about it with parents at conferences, because I didn't know what it meant. I am not trained on it." At the secondary level, the regular use of student data to inform and revise instruction, curriculum, and programs seems to vary from department to department. Some department staff members collaborate with a coach and receive a substitute during certain times of the year so they can work together to review student data. Other instructors report they "use data a lot" to identify areas students struggle with and to modify instruction. While discussing how staff members use data, one interviewee reported, "Data isn't a huge thing here. It could be a time issue. There just isn't enough time to look at it and delve into it."

Supporting Students in Need

Of the staff members surveyed, 70.8% agree the school staff regularly use data to target the needs of diverse student populations, 80% agree structures are in place to support all students to acquire skills and succeed in advanced courses, and 77.6% agree school staff work with students to identify their learning goals. Focus group interviews indicated all schools had some structures in place to personalize the educational setting and allow students to be personally monitored, although the effectiveness of these structures seems to vary from building to building.

At the elementary level, decisions about participation of children in prevention levels are data-driven, involving multiple assessments for diagnosis, and involve a broad base of stakeholders through the Child Access Team (CAT). According to staff members, the CAT includes the special education (SPED) teacher, counselor, occupational therapist, psychologist, and other building staff. "Teachers come with data and information and discuss if a student needs help with social skills, a behavior plan, special education testing, or daily check-ins. We have so many kids under our wing now, and they're in good place," explained one staff member. Staff members shared that new curriculum and assessments have made it easier to identify students who need help. "This year has been really effective with *Journeys* and easyCBM. We are able to identify students who are high risk," shared one educator. While students are receiving remedial services, they are progress monitored with easyCBM on a monthly timeline. Classroom teachers and reading instructors collaborate to make decisions about transitioning students between intervention levels.

As described in the *Extended Learning Time for Students and Adults* section of this report, multi-tiered reading support is now in place at the elementary level. Staff members explained they will also start using a pull-out model in math this year to give extra assistance to targeted students. As one building administrator described it, the reading program is a "partial RTI traditional model, specifically through the use of referrals to the CAT teams then special education is served by grouping kids and they get the intensive reading program with additional pull-out time." At one school, a staff member reported that all students used to participate in a multi-tiered reading program, but now it is used "mainly for Title kids." Staff members receive Reading Mastery

training from the special education teacher and the reading and math specialists. One staff member explained:

We used to have a wonderful intervention system but that is no more. Now the reading intervention is part of the *Journeys* curriculum. It has Tier 2 and Tier 3 built into it. This is done with varying levels of fidelity – teachers are coming up with creative ways to use Tier 2 and 3 materials.

The *Journeys* curriculum also includes differentiated material for ELLs. Many staff members referenced it when asked how they accommodated diverse learning needs in their classrooms. Staff members explained that ELL students receive specific services at the elementary level, although staff members didn't elaborate on them.

Special Education students are served in the resource room as well as in general education classes. In focus groups staff members explained, "All SPED students get Common Core in their general education classes, then they get double dipped. They come to us and either get Tier 2 or 3, or direct instruction." When asked about the effects of mainstreaming SPED students, one staff member replied:

I think the change to mainstreaming is the best. I think it's really good for the IEP kids, when we go into the classroom and are working with everyone. It's not like there is a stigma on kids anymore. Now kids want to get into our groups.

At one school, interventionists use a push-in or pull-out method to work with students on a small group or individual basis. One staff member explained that the librarian and the PE teacher are "doing *Journeys* with [those students]." This year, teachers are also relying more heavily on paraeducators and interventionists, focus group respondents reported. One principal confirmed, "EAs (Educational Assistants) have been used in ways they've never been used before. They are doing the assessments, hopefully with fidelity."

At the middle school, a "group of qualified professionals," including the school counselors, psychologist, and special education teachers, meet on a weekly basis to discuss students of concern and to action plan around potential interventions and strategies. While describing this model of support, one staff member shared, "It's not RTI (Response To Intervention) *per se* now, but we help teachers who need ideas in the same way. We need a common language. We have things in place, but are not talking about them in RTI terms." Another staff member agreed with this sentiment, adding, "We don't have a common language . . . we don't talk about `Level One, Level Two, Level Three.' Maybe it's something to talk to admin about."

As described in the *Extended Learning Time for Students and Adults* section, both the middle school and the high school are using CORE Flex Time to personalize the educational setting for students in need. According to focus group members, counselors work to ensure students are in the proper CORE Flex period depending on their need. Focus group respondents indicate they try not to have more than 25 students assigned to a

particular teacher. The CORE Flex assignments for students are adjusted monthly based on recent grades. Most teachers reported CORE Flex to be a positive intervention for students, although they admitted that it does take some extra work for teachers. On Fridays, the school has assemblies, time for student clubs, and/or Navigation 101 (advisory) depending on the schedule for the month.

In addition to the CORE Flex program, Cold Spring High School has some additional elements of a multi-tiered intervention framework. Staff members screen freshman students and place them in the appropriate English course based on multiple data points. According to staff members, the decision to place a student in an extension class is data driven and involves various stakeholders. Staff members reported that progress monitoring tools are used regularly in the extension courses. The school also has a Response to Intervention team that meets periodically and was responsible for getting CORE Flex started last year. Other interventions to help students included the Special Education department, the counseling center, and ways for students to get credit recovery through an online program. Issues in this area mentioned by interviewees included having "a lot of needy kids in Special Education this year and not having enough time and personnel to serve all of them or to work with teachers on adaptations," and not having a career counselor.

Green Hill has a variety of services ELLs and Students with Disabilities (SWD). An ELL instructor assesses students' language abilities at intake and decides on their language arts placement. ELL students may be placed in a mainstream language arts course or in an ELL course. Other teachers reported that they have Spanish-language materials for ELL students. One teacher explained:

I have Spanish language for the kids that don't speak English. I do have coursework set up for kids in Spanish language. One of the things that I know from experience, conversational language is different than technical language. I give them the option whether they want English or Spanish language.

Staff members also reported that Green Hill has recently experienced an influx of Students with Disabilities (SWD). One staff member estimated that school has gone from a student population with "15-20%" of students with IEPs to a level of "30-40%." Additionally, the staff member estimated that 65% of students have a mental health diagnosis "some as benign as ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) or as serious as schizophrenia." The school has a mental health facility on campus, a psychologist, and a counselor. Many of the school's courses are computer-based and can be easily adapted to students with a wide variety of educational backgrounds. In focus groups, Green Hill staff and administrators said that collaboration is the key to providing the right mix of services for these students. However, despite weekly meetings with the mental health team, staff members admitted that the school is still struggling to accommodate the needs of SWD. One staff member pointed to the inconsistency of coordination between classroom teachers and counseling staff, the lack of adequate materials for students in the school's mental health units, and the infrequency of

specialized training for teachers. "Students often do not receive an IEP appropriate to the Green Hill setting," one staff member said.

Establish a Safe and Supportive School Environment

Student and School Success Principle	Rubric Score 2013
Establish a Safe and Supportive School Environment	
Safe and Orderly Environment	2.8
Building Relationships	3.0

Safe and Orderly Environment

Several staff members mentioned concerns an aging infrastructure in terms of some school buildings. “Some facilities are so old,” one teacher said. At R.E. Bennett Elementary School, one staff member said, "The air quality is bad. Once I get into the building, I seem to have a sinus problem." At Cold Spring Middle School, teachers reported that a leaky roof creates "slick" floors and water stains on the ceiling. Middle school staff members also pointed out the carpet in the building is need of repair. "The carpet is 25 years old," explained one staff member, "It is causing health issues. The dust in the carpet bothers people with allergies and there is mold from the leaking. My carpet is held together with duct tape; it's a problem." At Cascade Elementary School, a staff member spoke of inadequate wheelchair accessibility, saying, “Typically, if a handicapped student needs to get from one side of the building to the other, they have to go outside. Additionally if it is raining, there are no sheltered walkways for the handicapped children to use, therefore they get wet." At multiple buildings, focus group members complained of fluctuating temperatures. “It’s always either too hot or too cold,” one parent said. District officials acknowledged the problem of an aging infrastructure. One official explained, “With state funding, our adoption cycle got suspended, and our facilities plan got stopped.” Despite these concerns, 93.4% of staff survey respondents agreed their school environment is conducive to learning. The student responses were lower, however, with 66% of students agreeing their school was clean and orderly.

Survey results indicate the majority of staff members do not see student behavior as a concern. Most (88.3%) staff members agree their school has clear rules for student behavior, and 70% agree the rules are consistently enforced by all staff. Of the parents surveyed, 81% agree their child’s teacher enforces classroom and school rules. However, student responses, again, are noticeably lower, with 59% of students agreeing discipline is handled fairly in their school. Similarly, 66% of students agreed they feel safe while at school, compared to the 93% of staff members who agree their school is a safe place to work. The parent responses were in the middle, with 88% of parents agreeing the school is a safe place for their child. Only 25% of students agreed students at their school respect each other, though 70% agree they know where to get help if they are being bullied.

Researchers did not find evidence of a district-wide behavioral management system. Instead, student behavior seemed to be handled on a school-by-school basis. In some cases, rules also differed from classroom to classroom, although there seemed to be some

school-wide rules and policies that all teachers adhered to. "It really depends on the teacher," said one high school student. "Some give you detention if you have anything other than water. Others, you can eat lunch in [their classrooms]." At an elementary school, a staff member stated, "I use my own discipline. Unless a severe behavior issue occurs, we are given the freedom to do that." However, another staff member pointed out the "different discipline procedures in each classroom" caused difficulties in implementing the multi-tiered reading program last year.

Other schools have more uniform discipline systems. At two schools, researchers noted procedures that seemed to be based on Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems (PBIS), although neither school had formally adopted PBIS. At the middle school, focus group respondents noted they intentionally did not refer to their new discipline system as PBIS. One interviewee shared:

There is a focus on discipline this year, making it school wide . . . Teachers may see it [PBIS] as another initiative and are asking to wait until next year [to implement]. We have some big things to work in the right direction toward. I'm excited to get teachers bought into positive behavior expectations. It's the philosophy and ideas of how we are approaching behavior and working with students.

Unlike practices in previous years, middle school teachers are asked to call parents if they write a referral for a student this year. Staff members seem to have mixed thoughts about this practice. Some argued that it made teachers more likely to solve discipline problems themselves, while others countered that calling home for every discipline infraction took too much time. In addition, middle school staff members also raised concerns about inconsistent follow-through at the administrative level. One staff member said:

[Administrators] don't follow what is in the agenda based on how many referrals, but based on the kid, how well they like the kid, and their [student's] circumstances at home. Someone might be expelled or suspended while another one may not. It's confusing for the kids and for us.

At the middle school, staff members also raised concerns about student behavioral issues before and after school and during lunch. Due to the district bussing schedule, the middle school students are the first to be dropped off in the morning and the last to be picked up. "Our students have a lot of unstructured time, and middle school students need structure the most," stated one focus group participant. When asked how the situation could be remedied, staff members suggested "more administrator presence" and the use of more paraeducators to help supervise, especially during lunch duty.

At Green Hill, staff members also raised some concerns about safety. Teachers said that, because of privacy concerns, they do not receive detailed information about their students' criminal histories or mental health concerns. "We [teachers] are left with maximum-security level intensive mental health residents with no background information, no notification concerning potential triggers, and we are in no way trained to respond to potential outbursts," one teacher said.

Staff also said that the school lacks an adequate system for communicating quickly in the event of an emergency. For example, during a classroom observation, a teacher pointed out that his telephone landline was connected by an exposed cord extending from the front of the room to a jack near the back of the room. In the event of an emergency, he worried that a student might unplug the phone, leaving him unable to call other staff members for help. Other teachers expressed similar concerns about emergency procedures.

Building Relationships

When asked to identify strengths in the district, answers tended to center around dedicated staff members and supportive school environments. Several people mentioned that teachers, once hired, tended to stay in Cold Spring long-term. Many staff members said the culture of their school was supportive and respectful of their work. "The climate is great! The staff is so happy and positive," shared one staff member. At another school, a staff member said, "There is a higher level of cross-generational respect. At other schools, I really felt invisible. I really feel included here. I very rarely have a teacher who doesn't greet me in a very open and respectful way." The vast majority (91%) of staff members surveyed agreed the school staff treats each other with respect. Of the students surveyed, 82% agreed teachers and other adults in their school show respect for each other.

Similarly, researchers found evidence of positive relationships between adults and students in the schools. District-wide, 93% of lessons observed scored a 3 or 4 on Indicator 13, indicating those teachers had assured their classroom is a positive, inspirational, and safe environment. At Green Hill Academic School, a staff member explained how adults build a respectful school culture:

We shake their hands and tell them good morning. Treat them like the most important person they are seeing today... We don't know what happened before they got here. We know walking through the gates is a traumatic experience. Imagine how discomforting it is to walk in and know you will be here for a year.

“The culture of our district is about relationships,” one district official said. “Because of this, there are layers of support for our students.” Staff members at another school reported many different strategies for establishing and maintaining relationships with their students, including talking to them in the hallways, asking them about their day, and generally showing interest in their lives. One interviewee discussed the benefit of staying with [looping] their advisory groups for two years, saying, “It helps to build rapport with those kids.” One parent shared her perspective, "My experience has been amazing. My [child] came to [R.E. Bennett] with an IEP, and now she's on grade level. [The teacher] has been really positive and believing in her. It helped build her confidence to do the work."

Staff and family surveys showed higher results in this area than student surveys did. The vast majority (95.4%) of staff members agreed school staff show they care about all students. Parent surveys were slightly lower, but still strong. The majority (80%) agreed there was an adult at school their child trusts and can go to for help with a problem, and 73% agreed the school staff values their child's opinions. Of the students surveyed, 65% agreed the adults in their school showed respect for them, 68% agreed they trust their teachers, and 58% agreed the adults in their building cared about all students, not just a few.

Engage Family and Community

Student and School Success Principle	**Rubric Score 2013**
Engage Family and Community	
Family Communication	2.8
Family and Community Engagement	3.0

Family Communication

Family Communication was one of the highest-scoring sections in this report, with most schools scoring a 3. According to the district's strategic plan, increasing the level of parent and community involvement within the school district was a focus from 2008 to 2013. Of the strategies listed to achieve this goal, two particularly speak to communication: reporting community participation in school and staff participation in the community, and utilizing a number of communication methods, such as district and school publications, newspapers, radio and technology to inform staff, volunteers and community members of service opportunities.

Staff members across the district reported communicating with families in a variety of ways, such as Skyward, newsletters, all calls, conferences, an open house, and emails. At one school, staff members mentioned "Friday Folders" that go home with the students every Friday. In the Friday Folder, students have updates on progress, work they have done the entire week, and often homework. Parents are required to sign the Friday Folder, and then it is returned to school on Mondays, providing another means of communication between families and teachers. An interviewee at another school discussed their effort to contact parents with positive messages, saying, "I try to focus on the lows and the highs. I make a call or send a note home. I try to slip in a positive thing, even if I'm calling about something not going well." Of the parents surveyed, 85% agreed school staff communicates in a way that is convenient for them, 77% agreed the school makes it easy for them to attend meetings, and 82% agreed their child's teachers respond promptly when they have a question or concern.

When asked what they still need to work as a school, one building representative shared: Communicating with families and continuing to open this place up to families is something we need to change. It goes from warm and fuzzy in elementary school, and

then they get a `stay out of middle school' idea. We need to work on more inclusiveness with parents.

One focus group participant shared that translation is “available on a limited basis,” although another participant mentioned that a goal, at one school, was to get all documents translated. Staff members said that some documents are available in Spanish, while others, like the school newsletter, are not. A focus group respondent acknowledged:

It's probably frustrating for some families. At the start of the year, Spanish families get the handbook, but can't read it because it's not translated. It would be lovely to have a translator on staff (at district level). A lot of times the kids can communicate with the parents, but not in detail.

Parents at another school reported that the "newsletter is translated into Spanish" and documents are "translated if you request it." This indicates translation availability may differ from school to school. Staff members at a few schools reported difficulty in finding the resources to communicate with families who spoke languages other than English and Spanish. “We have a Korean mom that we are trying to find an interpreter. We go through the state to find interpreters," said a staff member at one school. Of the students surveyed, 40% agreed interpreters are available if they or their family needs them.

At Green Hill, the one school that scored a 2, staff members reported having limited contact with students' parents. There, only 14% of staff members surveyed agreed that teachers had frequent contact with their students' families. Similarly, only 14% agreed that school provides information to families about to help students succeed in school. In an interview, both the principal and the facility superintendent said that living unit counselors provide parent-like support for their students.

Family and Community Engagement

Family and Community Engagement was another of the highest-scoring sections in this report, with all schools scoring a 3. As part of the plan to increase the level of parent and community involvement, the district listed “continue to provide opportunities for families to join students in the learning environment,” as a strategy from 2008 to 2013.

The principal at one school explained that the community is "involved whenever we have asked. They listen." Focus group respondents across the district mentioned numerous partnerships between schools and community organizations. A district homeless liaison talks to students who may be in transition between homes. Food drives at the school supply food to the local food bank, as well as a clothing drive. Around the holidays, the local police station has a program, Shop with a Cop, that takes students shopping for families who cannot afford gifts or food. One school opens its facilities to Young Life and local basketball for meetings or games. The new field going in behind Olympic Elementary School will act as baseball fields for the community as well as the school. One school maintains a parent team library for parents to check out relevant literature.

At the elementary level, schools offer a number of ways for parents to get involved. Focus group members mentioned a number of activities that occur at schools for family members, from summer barbecues and game nights, to curriculum nights and open houses, to the Daddy Daughter Dance or the Mother Son Date Night. Additionally, the YMCA provides students with after school program activities. All of the elementary schools utilize volunteers who work with students in small groups, help teachers in classrooms, or chaperone field trips.

At the middle school, eighth grade students participate in an outreach program to the local food bank. This opportunity allows students to receive service-learning hours, and, according to one interviewee, "gives the students a chance to give back to the community in an enjoyable way." Students also participate in community service events such as a canned food drive and a Pennies for Patients drive to raise money for leukemia and lymphoma patients. As a way to promote post-secondary awareness, the school counselors work with community members to provide a career fair for students every other year. Reportedly, this event "brings in tons of community members." Donors, including funds from the Cold Spring Foundation help to provide experiences such as a STEM summer learning program and other related opportunities for students from the middle school. Partnerships with Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Sound Care Kids offer students mentorship opportunities and grief support. Although parents reportedly volunteer for socials and school functions, there is no active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in place at the middle school.

At the high school, many interviewees mentioned the generous support provided to the school and district by the Cold Spring Foundation. Talking about support from the Foundation, one person commented, "The Cold Spring Foundation has been huge for a certain segment of the population." Others talked about other community support, "We love our high school," claimed one parent. "The community is amazing. We often have alumni that raise money." Students and parents at Cold Spring also mentioned booster clubs for athletics and music programs. The school also has partnerships with businesses in the community that provide resources and some that provide students with college scholarships. One person shared, "We have a partnership with Fred Hutch. We have grads in the UW program and at WSU, and they are helping us build connections."

Although some parents are involved in volunteering at the school, parents participating in the focus group reported that a few parents do a lot and there are many who are not involved. The parents also claimed, "The middle school and high school are not very parent friendly for volunteering. They don't ask for a lot of volunteers, and in some ways it feels like they do not want you here." A building representative from the middle school voiced a similar concern:

Communicating with families and continuing to open this place up to families is something we need to change. It goes from warm and fuzzy in elementary school and then they get a `stay out of middle school' idea. We need to work on more inclusiveness with parents.

According to survey results, 60.4% of staff members agree community organizations and/or family volunteers work regularly in classrooms and at the school, while 83.1% agree the school works with community organizations to support its students. Of the family members surveyed, 74% agree the school offers many opportunities for family members to volunteer or help in the school, 64% agree the school works with community organizations to support their child, 57% agree community volunteers work regularly at their child's school, and 53% agree the school helps connect their family with community resources.

Build and Sustain Equitable and Culturally Competent Systems and Policies for All Students

Student and School Success Principle	**Rubric Score 2013**
Build and Sustain Equitable and Culturally Competent Systems and Policies for All Students	
Culturally Competent System	2.2
High Expectations	2.7

Culturally Competent System
School report card data from OSPI indicate the majority of students (74%) of Cold Spring students are white, with Hispanics/Latinos-as making up the next largest demographic at 15.6%. Only 3.4% of students district-wide qualify as Transitional Bilingual. However, 49.5% of students district-wide qualify for free and reduced-price meals. Focus group respondents at one school also mentioned the community has "a high rate of incarceration and substance abuse." In addition, Green Hill has a more ethnically diverse population compared to the other schools.

To address barriers of poverty in the community, staff members at one school referred to a full time mental health counselor from Cascade Mental Health who connects families to resources and works with them "help their children achieve academic and social success," as stated in the SIP. A staff member commented, "We have a good connection with all Cascade Mental Health employees. They are important for this community." Staff members also mentioned the Shop with a Cop program and the PTA sponsored Helping Hands "closet" that houses clothes for students in need. Community businesses also donate food, backpack, clothing, and school supplies.

Some focus group respondents indicated cultural competency training has not been a priority, as staff and administration did not see the population as particularly diverse and there was "no need" seen for training. While some focus groups members did not seem to feel the need for more training in this area, others expressed the need for increased awareness around working with students who come from poverty and diverse backgrounds. An interviewee at one school said, "The staff needs training in adverse childhood experiences. We deal with a lot of children in poverty, drug related, homeless, et cetera. There's not a whole lot of training about that." A teacher at another school remarked staff members should have training around the growing Hispanic population,

saying, “We need to know more about Hispanic culture and understand it better. Most of the time students come from Mexico, and it's hard [for them] to get integrated into the new school culture.” Students at the high school reported that they do have a variety of clubs aimed at including different student populations, and the Associated Student Body does have Hispanic representatives.

Green Hill, the one school that scored a 3 in this area, offers a variety of culturally-themed clubs for students of various ethnic and religious backgrounds, including clubs for African American, Native American, and Hispanic students. However, staff members and students admitted there are sometimes problems both within and between ethnic groups on campus. For example, staff members said that several White supremacist students have tried to start their own cultural group at Green Hill. The students interviewed said they try to avoid fighting with other students, regardless of ethnic background. One student explained:

If you just respect people here, they will respect you back. If you don't say anything stupid, they won't do anything stupid to you. Treat people the way you want to be treated. There's a lot going on. You just do you. You worry about yourself.

Only 36.3% of staff members agreed the school staff receives training on how to work with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. One teacher stated, "[Professional development on cultural competency] isn't something that is really addressed by the district." However, 90.7% agreed school staff respect the cultural heritage of all students. Of the family members surveyed, 74% agree the school’s programs reflect and respect the diversity of their family. One elementary staff member commented, “I have noticed the reading curriculum has cultural stuff, [like] integrated color words in Spanish.” A slightly smaller majority of parents (69%) agree school staff teach their child respect for different cultures, and 66% agree their child sees his/her culture and family respectfully portrayed in school learning materials, signs, and displays.

High Expectations

Stakeholders from multiple focus groups shared that one of the district’s primary foci is on college and career readiness. “As the standards changed, the mission statement tried to keep up,” one teacher said. District officials spoke of wanting to push students towards Ivy League colleges. As part of the push towards college and career readiness, multiple stakeholders mentioned the STEM program at the high school. This program was funded, in part, through the Cold Spring Foundation, a nonprofit organization which lists “to pursue academic excellence in the Cold Spring schools” as part of its mission statement.

However, stakeholders from multiple groups acknowledged work still needed to be done to improve college and career readiness in the district. When asked what the district was doing to support college and career readiness, one district official spoke frankly, saying, “I think we are doing a terrible job. It hasn’t been a focus.” A school board member shared, “I believe the district is solid for the college bound, and for many career bound students in specific areas. Offerings are numerous; however, there are gaps.” Multiple focus group respondents spoke of wanting to improve offerings for career-bound

students, perhaps in partnership with Arlington Community College. In addition, stakeholders spoke of wanting to create a more visible culture of college awareness. A representative from the Cold Spring Foundation shared, “They (staff members) don’t talk about Husky Promise or Cougar Commitment. We don’t hear them talking about college or the opportunities.”

Union officials, on the other hand, spoke of improvements in this area. One teacher said, “All of us say, ‘when you get to college’ at least once a day . . . even from early grades, college is being seen as attainable.” In addition, multiple focus group members spoke of a need to revamp academic counseling services, citing a lack of time for counselors as a barrier. A district official explained, “The counselors don’t have time to explain the opportunities to the students, especially if they are doing well with classes and have good SAT [scores].”

Focus group interviews suggested staff members across the district are still coming to a general consensus on what rigorous teaching and learning looks like. At one school, some interviewees identified their classes to be "very rigorous" or "very challenging" while others suggested the level of rigor "depends on the classroom," and that "some teachers work harder than others" to create a challenging academic environment. At another school, some focus group respondents questioned whether their students could achieve to a high standard. For example, one teacher said:

Common Core is appropriate for kids with good home lives, but not for the kids we have here. The children aren't ready to meet those levels. This group of kids in particular is so far behind, and they've never been exposed to this type of learning before. When you give the comprehension fill in the bubble test, they don't do very well.

At another school, staff members felt rigor and expectations had increased, especially for special education students. One staff member explained:

For years, we felt we had to hold back in what we could teach them, and we always wanted the expectations to be higher. Now with the teachers we have, they have higher expectations. Before, we were told, ‘Do not alter direct instruction because kids won't pass the test anyway.’

A number of staff members mentioned the variety of advanced courses offered by the high school as an example of high expectations. "We have wider variety of advanced courses than most schools I've been at," stated one person. Several staff members cited the Navigation 101 program as one example of having high expectations for students and providing them with extra support to develop goals and plan for their future.

Survey results indicate 71% of students agree their teacher believes all students can do well, 79% agree their teacher encourages them to do their best, 78% agree their teacher expects all students to work hard, and 63% agree their school teaches study skills, goal setting, time management, and other ways to succeed in school. Family surveys indicate 80% of parents agree school staff expect all students to meet high standards, 78% agree

their child receives detailed feedback about the quality of the work s/he does, 73% agree their child is learning what s/he needs to be successful later in life, and 82% agree teachers challenge their child to work hard and be successful.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of strengths set the Cold Spring School District apart from other districts in the state. Due to its incredibly robust partnerships with community organizations, such as the Cold Spring Foundation, the district is able to offer a wide variety of advanced coursework through the STEM program at Cold Spring. Stakeholders from a wide variety of groups praised both district and building leadership, citing open communication, trust, and support for calculated risk-taking as key strengths. Caring and supportive school and classroom environments also emerged as a key strength for the district. It is notable that teachers, once hired, tend to remain in the district. Staff members spoke of feeling supported by each other and of having open lines of communication.

However, though staff members referred to the culture of Cold Spring as collaborative, teachers in Cold Spring have few opportunities to collaborate with each other. This means that much of the work around statewide initiatives, such as TPEP and Common Core, is being done in isolation, and that teachers have few opportunities to collaboratively plan or reflect on lessons, review student work, or analyze data. Additionally, although the adoption of the 5D framework has begun to give teachers a common vocabulary with which to talk about instruction, researchers noted Cold Spring teachers are still gaining a common awareness of powerful teaching and learning, and have yet to put these ideas into common practice. Finally, teachers indicated they had little to no training in working with students of diverse backgrounds, including socioeconomic status. That is troubling when combined with factors that limit opportunities for students to enroll in advanced coursework.

Moving forward, the district has an incredible opportunity to build on its strengths and address these weaknesses. Its small size and strong community partnerships give the Cold Spring School District a flexibility that larger districts lack. As the district plans for its future, we recommend it consider the following recommendations:

Build College Awareness Through the System. In order to develop a district culture that promotes college and career readiness, we recommend the formation of a College and Career Readiness Committee with stakeholders from each building, district administration, and the community. The purpose of this committee should be to develop a vision of what college and career readiness means in Cold Spring, to study the available data on college and career readiness, and to decide which types of data the district should try to influence and track long-term. Some things that the committee may want to focus on include developing strategies at each school that align with the College and Career Readiness vision, building the capacity of teachers to provide college and career readiness information (e.g., through Navigation 101) throughout the system, aligning course taking policies

Develop a College and Career Dashboard. Although you may want to commission your own Cohort Study to determine indicators of drop out for your students, Cohort Studies in Spokane and Seattle can provide some guidance on the type of data you should be tracking both to identify students at risk of dropping out and to ensure students are on a path toward College and Career Readiness.

In many ways, the data used for an Early Warning System is similar to data you would use to ensure that students are on track for graduation and are College and Career Ready. In developing a district College and Career Readiness Dashboard, you may consider including some of the following indicators, which are separated into five general themes or topics below. To ensure a College and Career Readiness Dashboard is comprehensive you will want to consider collecting ongoing data in each of these areas. Some district and school level indicators are available online, but many will need to be collected at the district and school level. The following is not an exhaustive list of all College and Career Readiness indicators but represents data that is often accessible to districts within their existing data systems and is prevalent in College and Career Readiness Systems in many districts and states throughout the country. Providing comparison data for indicators can help you set benchmarks. The following links are websites where you can get access to data for Washington State and the nation on different indicators.

Student Growth and Proficiency:
Grades – In the Spokane Cohort Study, the researcher found that failing grades were an important predictor of dropping out. Students are at greater risk if 1) they failed any core course in middle school or high and 2) if they received a failing grade in any core course in consecutives semesters/quarters.
GPA – In the Seattle Cohort Study, the researcher found that a cumulative GPA of below 1.5 at any grade was predictive of not graduating from high school.
Test Scores: http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/summary.aspx?year=2012-13
According to the results of the Spokane Cohort Study, students scoring in the lowest third (on math and reading) of the district distribution of raw scores on the state assessment were less likely to graduate. Additionally, test scores were a more powerful predictor in elementary and middle school.
Course-Taking – An important indicator of College and Career Readiness is the percentage of students who graduate from high school with the necessary courses to be admitted to a four-year college. (The BERC Group regularly performs transcript analysis to help districts and schools track this information.)

Student Engagement/Behaviors:
Unexcused Absences - Less than half of students with 4+ unexcused absences graduate (Spokane Cohort Study)
Disciplinary Actions - Out of school suspension or an expulsion is strongly predictive of dropping out of school and is even worse results for students with 2+ serious disciplinary events (Spokane Cohort Study)
Non-Cognitive Factors - Increasingly, evidence on non-cognitive factors are being shown to play a role in student success. Measuring factors such as a student's 1) academic behaviors, 2) academic perseverance, 3) academic mindsets, 4) learning

strategies, and 5) social skills could also be incorporated into a vision of a student being College and Career Ready (*Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners*).

College Planning:
Staff, student, and parent survey data (for an example see the questions gathered for Navigation 101 at Cold Spring High School)
% of eligible students enrolled in College Bound Scholarship program
% of students submitting one or more college application
% of students going on a college visit
% of students completing the FAFSA
% of students admitted to one or more college
% of students receiving a scholarship
% of students participating in college placement exams
Average score of students taking college placement exams
% of students meeting college readiness benchmark on college placement exams
Advanced Placement: http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/ap/rtn/9th-annual/9th-annual-ap-report-double-page.pdf

PSAT and SAT:
PSAT (10th grade) - http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/research/WA_13_05_03_01.pdf
PSAT (11th grade) - http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/research/WA_13_05_02_01.pdf
SAT - http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/research/2013/WA_13_03_03_01.pdf

ACT: http://www.act.org/newsroom/data/2013/states/pdf/Washington.pdf

Career Planning:
Staff, student, and parent survey data
% of students taking in career assessment
% of students completing an internship/job shadow/service learning
% of students participating in career fair
% of students taking career interest inventory
# of community speakers
Connections with tech schools
# of alumni mentors

Alumni Performance (much of this data can be accessed either at www.collegetracking.com or http://erdcdata.wa.gov/):
% of graduates enrolling in college
% of students enrolling in remedial coursework
% of graduates persisting in college
% of students completing college degree
% of students gainfully employed – alumni survey

Develop strong instructional habits. We recommend the district provide professional development support to help teachers develop their instructional habits. Each school should develop an instructional leadership time that will participate in the professional development and will provide support to the staff to ensure that teachers move beyond the awareness of research-based instructional strategies and instead develop the habit of using them. Through this support, teachers ill have opportunities to collaborate with colleagues both in and out of their subject areas and/or grade bands. It can be powerful to pair teachers across disciplines, and have them plan lessons pedagogically. When their focus is on instruction they will be using in the classroom, not the content itself, even teachers from widely different subject areas can collaborate on making their lessons stronger. Afterwards, they can re-group with these colleagues to reflect on the lessons they planned and discuss ways to improve their use of the strategy next time. Intentional peer support and the opportunity to reflect on their teaching will help teachers to develop stronger instructional habits.

The initial focus should be on developing instructional habits that promote critical thinking, student collaboration, and real-world application. Based on an analysis of STAR classroom observation data, we recommend you begin with a focus on strategies and techniques that will build proficiency in Criterion 2, with a secondary focus on Criterion 1. To build proficiency around Criterion 2, we recommend teachers use a variety of questioning strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and/or communication skills. One way to do this is to probe beyond a correct or incorrect answer, and ask students to explain *how* they reached their conclusions. By articulating their thinking, students will reflect on their learning and develop conceptual understanding, not just recall. Having students in demonstrate verbally or in writing that they are intentionally reflecting on their learning is another way to build critical thinking in the classroom and to promote proficiency around Criterion 2. Students can reflect on their learning in a number of ways. Some teachers use journal entries or exit slips for this purpose. It can also be powerful to have students use rubrics to score their own work or a peer's, justifying why they gave the scores they did. A third way to build proficiency around Criterion 2 encourages students opportunities to collaborate in pairs or small groups. These opportunities don't need to be elaborate. Even a series of brief think-pair-shares sprinkled into a lesson can give students the opportunity to learn from each other. Teachers can hold students accountable for this collaboration in a number of ways, by keeping discussion time brief, for example, or by randomly calling on students to debrief with the class as a whole. An intentional focus on critical thinking and student collaboration will help teachers develop proficiency in Criterion 2.

To raise scores in Criterion 1, we recommend teachers focus on developing real-world connections to the material being covered in class. When going over learning objectives with the class, teachers can explain *why* students are being asked to develop a concept or skill. Even more powerfully, they can ask students to explain this to each other. In addition, they can relate lesson material to other subject areas, personal experiences, and contexts. They can also have students demonstrate a meaningful personal connection by extending learning activities in the classroom and/or beyond the classroom. Intentional usage of technology opens up a number of avenues for this, such as students participating

in web quests, collaborating with peers in other schools, or developing blog entries or podcasts. We recommend teachers collaborate to brainstorm ideas for extending learning activities. An intentional focus on developing real-world applications in the classroom, especially combined with increased opportunities for student collaboration, will build teacher proficiency around Criterion 1.

Strengthen the STEM program through intentional fine-tuning. The vitality of the STEM program is one of the district's strengths; however, it can be improved through developing stronger articulation, increasing community partnerships, and eliminating barriers to access. We recommend STEM teachers have regular opportunities for interdisciplinary planning to improve the articulation of the STEM program. Through better articulation, the district can help to ensure that the available math offerings support the science offerings, for example. This will also help STEM teachers to develop stronger instructional habits, and perhaps create projects that touch on multiple disciplines. This will help students to see cross-disciplinary application of the material they are learning. We also recommend the district partner with community businesses to seek opportunities for STEM internships. The district may consider assigning someone at the district level to serve as a liaison to develop internships and partnerships. Finally, we recommend the district explore ways to decrease barriers to the STEM program to allow a wider range of students to take advantage of the opportunities it offers. It may consider offering support classes or tutoring for students who need extra assistance to succeed in higher-level math or science classes, for example, or pushing enrollment in gatekeeper classes. Work in this area can be done in conjunction with the College and Career Readiness Committee, once it is developed.

Increase opportunities for teacher collaboration. We recommend the district develop a schedule that allows for dedicated teacher collaboration time in professional learning communities (PLCs). A number of districts across the state have adopted a one-hour early release or late start once a week; others have built in collaboration time through creative scheduling. Although it can be difficult to set up initially, the impact on student learning can be incredible. Weekly collaboration will ensure stronger horizontal and vertical articulation of curriculum by allowing teachers to develop common assessments and plan lessons together. It will also allow teachers to divide the heavier workload being required of them through statewide initiatives, helping to mitigate the effects of burnout. Administrators can hold teachers accountable during this collaboration time by sitting in on meetings and/or by requiring PLCs to turn in minutes. If the district decides to adopt this schedule, it's important to keep it dedicated to collaboration – it should be seen as a time for teachers to apply their learning, cooperatively plan lessons, and share student work, not as an opportunity for formal professional development or whole-staff meetings.

Implement a comprehensive guidance system using advisory as a delivery method. Stakeholders raised concerns about the academic counseling available for students and their parents, noting limited time and a "reactive" system as barriers. Additionally, staff members at the high school noted frustration with the Navigation 101 program, remarking the limited meetings do not give them enough time to get to know students, and that their role as advisors is sometimes limited to "just passing out papers." To

address both of these concerns, we recommend the high school clarify the purposes for Navigation 101 advisory classes, with the intent of turning advisory into the vehicle for getting that college and career readiness information to students without overburdening counselors. Several schools, statewide, that have implemented Navigation 101 most successfully have designated a point person (often a counselor), as well as a team to help select and prep advisory lessons in advance. This limits the amount of work any individual teacher needs to do for the program and helps to ensure fidelity to the program. If the district decides to move forward with this, we recommend it also plan mandatory professional development for all Navigation 101 advisors to ensure they share a common understanding of advisory's purpose as well as a common understanding of current college entrance requirements. We also recommend the high school host lunch or evening events to help guide students through the college application process or to explore career options. This will make the counseling system a more viable resource for working parents.

Appendix B

STAR observation protocol

Table B1

Skills Indicators
1. Teacher provides an opportunity for students to develop and/or demonstrate skills.
2. Students' construct knowledge to develop conceptual understanding, not just recall.
3. Students engage in communication that builds or demonstrates conceptual understanding.
Thinking Indicators
4. Teacher uses a variety of questioning strategies to develop critical thinking.
5. Students develop and/or demonstrate effective thinking processes.
6. Students demonstrate that they are reflecting on a prompt and/or on their own learning.
Application Indicators
7. Teacher assures that the purpose of the lesson is clear and relevant to all students.
8. Students demonstrate a meaningful personal connection to the lesson.
9. Students produce something for an audience within or beyond the classroom.
Relationships Indicators
10. Teacher assures the classroom is a positive and challenging academic environment.
11. Students work collaboratively to provide social, peer support for learning.
12. Students experience learning activities that are adapted to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Appendix C

Semi-structured interview protocol used to conduct interviews with IOC leaders and members.

Question 1: Please share your role in the CSSD.
Question 2: How did this collaboration and initiative come about?
- Who were the initial participant?
- What evidence and data was used to make initial decisions?
- What were the perceived needs of the community?

Question 3: What were the first steps like? How did you create goals and make decisions?
Question 4: How did you communicate about your collaboration and the initiative with school faculty, families, and the community?
Question 5: What are some lessons learned about the process that you could share with other district partnerships?
Question 6: What have been some of the barriers/ challenges the collaboration and leadership have faced?
Question 7: What do you see as the most successful components of the process/ collaboration/ initiative?
Question 8: What changes have you seen?
- In students?
- In teachers?
- In the community?

Question 9: Have the goals changed over time? If so, how?
Question 10: How did the collaboration form additional connections with more organizations (specifically with the local college)?
Question 11: What are next steps for the collaboration?
Question 12: What if you were starting over? What would you wish for?
Question 13: Can you provide a few words that describe the collaboration and initiative?

Appendix D

Table C1.

Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools

Clear and Shared Focus	Everybody knows where they are going and why. The focus is on achieving a shared vision, and all understand their role in achieving the vision. The focus and vision are developed from common beliefs and values, creating a consistent direction for all involved.
High Expectations for All Students	Teachers and staff believe that all students can learn and meet high standards. While recognizing that some students must overcome significant barriers, these obstacles are not seen as insurmountable. All students are offered an ambitious and rigorous course of study.
Effective School Leadership	Effective instructional and administrative school leadership is required to implement change processes. Effective leaders are proactive and seek help that is needed. They also nurture an instructional program and school culture conducive to learning and professional growth. Effective leaders have different styles and roles. Teachers and other staff, including those in the district office, often have a leadership role.
High Levels of Collaboration and Communication	There is strong teamwork among teachers across all grades and with other staff. Everybody is involved and connected to each other, including parents and members of the community, to identify problems and work on solutions.
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Aligned with Common Core State Standards	The planned and actual curriculums are aligned with the State Standards. Research-based teaching strategies and materials are used. Staff understands the role of classroom and state assessments, what the assessments measure, and how student work is evaluated.
Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching	A steady cycle of different assessments identify students who need help. More support and instructional time are provided, either during the school day or outside normal school hours, to students who need more help. Teaching is adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. Assessment results are used to focus and improve instructional programs.
Focused Professional Development	A strong emphasis is placed on training staff in areas of most need. Feedback from learning and teaching focuses extensive and ongoing professional development. The support is also aligned with the school or district vision and objectives.

Supportive Learning Environment	The school has a safe, civil, healthy and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Students feel respected and connected with the staff and are engaged in learning. Instruction is personalized and small learning environments increase student contact with teachers.
High Levels of Family and Community Involvement	There is a sense that all have a responsibility to educate students, not just the teachers and staff in schools. Families, as well as businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all play a vital role in this effort.

Appendix E

Items from the staff survey given in 2013 as part of the initial needs assessment.

Question 1: Name of School District _____
Question 2: Name of School _____
Question 3: Staff Role _____
Question 4: Gender _____
Question 5: Please select your race/ ethnicity for the list below (Mark all that apply)

Answer Choices
American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Black/African American
White
Hispanic/Latino/a
Pacific Islander
Decline to identify

Question 6: Years of teaching at this school

Answer Choices
1st year
2nd or 3rd year
4th or 5th year
6th - 9th year
10th year or more

Question 7: Total number of years teaching

Answer Choices
1st year
2nd or 3rd year
4th or 5th year
6th - 9th year
10th year or more

Question 8: Are you board certified? Y/ N
Question 9: Please consider your current school and choose the answer that best describes your agreement with the statement. If you do not know the answer to a question, please leave it blank.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. School staff treats each other with respect.					

2. Curriculum is aligned within grade levels (horizontal alignment).					
3. School staff makes families feel welcome at this school.					
4. School staff believes all students can learn complex concepts.					
5. School staff receives training in working with students from diverse cultural backgrounds.					
6. Administrators hold staff accountable for improving student learning.					
7. Parents (or guardians) participate in school wide decision making.					
8. Instructional strategies emphasize higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills.					
9. Administrators regularly visit classrooms to observe instruction.					
10. Staff members receive training on interpreting and using student data.					
11. Students are presented with a challenging curriculum designed to develop depth of understanding.					
12. My school's mission and purpose drive important decisions.					
13. The school's curriculum is aligned with state standards (EALRs).					
14. This school is a safe place to work.					
15. My school has clear rules for student behavior.					
16. School staffs provide ongoing, specific, and constructive feedback to students about their learning.					
17. Teachers modify and adapt instruction based on continuous monitoring of student progress.					
18. Our school maximizes instructional time for student learning.					
19. We have an evaluation process in place that helps all staff improve their practice.					
20. Professional development activities help school staff acquire greater knowledge of effective, research-based, content-specific pedagogy.					
21. School level data are disaggregated by subgroup indicators (e.g. race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, etc.).					

22. Staff members engage in collaborative professional learning opportunities focused on improving teaching and learning.					
23. Students are promoted to the next instructional level only when they have achieved competency.					
24. Teachers have frequent contact with their students' families.					
25. Teachers differentiate instruction to accommodate diverse learners, various learning styles, and multiple intelligences.					
26. Classroom learning goals and objectives are clearly defined.					
27. The school provides information to families about how to help students succeed in school.					
28. My school's mission and goals focus on improving student learning.					
29. School staff uses assessment data to help plan instructional activities.					
30. School staff expects all students to achieve high standards.					
31. A clear and collaborative decision-making process is used to select individuals for leadership roles in the building.					
32. School staff can freely express their opinions or concerns to the administrators.					
33. Professional development opportunities offered by my school and district are directly relevant to my needs.					
34. School leaders ensure instructional and organizational systems are regularly monitored and modified to support student learning.					
35. Structures are in place (for example, early intervention and remediation programs) to support all students to acquire skills and succeed in advanced courses.					
36. The school environment is conducive to learning.					
37. My school's mission and goals focus on raising the bar for all students and closing the achievement gap.					
38. School staff works with students to identify their learning goals.					

39. Community organizations and/or family volunteers work regularly in classrooms and in the school.					
40. Administrators expect high quality work of all the adults who work at this school.					
41. In our school, we communicate with families using a variety of methods (for example, email, notes, newsletters, website).					
42. Teachers have a good understanding of the state standards in the areas they teach.					
43. Professional development activities are research-based and aligned with standards and student learning goals.					
44. Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced by school staff.					
45. Administrators intentionally recruit and retain a diverse and highly qualified staff.					
46. School staff regularly uses data to target the needs of diverse student populations such as learning disabled, gifted and talented, limited English speaking.					
47. Staff members collaboratively review student work.					
48. Teachers use assessment methods that are ongoing and aligned with core content.					
49. The principal systematically engages school staff in discussions about current research on teaching and learning.					
50. The school has a long-term plan that provides focused and ongoing professional development to support the school's mission and goals.					
51. The school works with community organizations to support its students.					
52. My school's mission and goals are developed collaboratively.					
53. My school allocates resources in alignment with our school improvement goals.					
54. My school addresses language barriers to communication with non-English speaking families (e.g., provides interpreters, translates documents).					
55. Curriculum is aligned across grade levels. (vertical alignment)					

56. My school's improvement plan is data-driven.					
57. Professional development activities are sustained by ongoing follow-up and support.					
58. Administrators provide teachers with feedback that enables them to improve their practice.					
59. School staff shows that they care about students.					
60. Teachers invite their colleagues into classrooms to observe instruction.					
61. School staff respects the cultural heritage of all students.					
62. School staff has a common understanding of what constitutes effective instruction.					
63. Administrators consider various viewpoints and obtain a variety of perspectives when making decisions.					
64. The school deals effectively with bullying if it occurs.					

Appendix F

Items from the staff survey given in 2013 as part of the initial needs assessment.

Question 1: Name of School _____
Question 2: Name of School District _____
Question 3: Your relationship to student
_____
Question 4: Please select your race/ ethnicity for the list below (Mark all that apply)

Answer Choices
American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Black/African American
White
Hispanic/Latino/a
Pacific Islander
Decline to identify

Question 5: Does your student qualify for free or reduced lunch? Y/ N
Question 6: Is English your primary language spoken at home? Y/ N
Question 7: Please consider your child's current school, teachers, and school activities and choose the answer that best describes your agreement with the statement. If you have more than one child at this school, please consider your children's experiences as a whole. If you do not know the answer to a question, please leave it blank.

1. I have a clear understanding of what the school is trying to accomplish.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. I have seen that the school's mission and goals influence important decisions at my child's school.					
3. My child receives detailed feedback about the quality of the work he/she does.					
4. School staff expects my child to meet high standards.					
5. School staff keeps me well informed about my child's progress.					
6. Administrators provide opportunities for me to express my ideas and concerns.					

7. School staff keeps me informed about activities and events at the school.					
8. There is an adult at the school whom my child trusts and can go to for help with a problem.					
9. I feel welcome when I visit the school.					
10. School counselors and/or teachers help my child establish academic goals.					
11. My child's teachers demonstrate that they believe my child can learn.					
12. Administrators at this school are available to me.					
13. School staff communicates with me in a way that is convenient for me.					
14. The school's programs reflect and respect the diversity of my family.					
15. I feel that school is a safe place for my child.					
16. The school has a clearly defined purpose and mission.					
17. Teachers do whatever it takes to help my child meet high academic standards.					
18. School staff asks for my ideas and suggestions on important school decisions (for example, changes in curriculum, school policies, staffing, budget, dress codes).					
19. Administrators expect high quality work from all adults at my child's school.					
20. School work challenges my child to think and solve problems.					
21. School staff uses school work and test scores to identify my child's learning needs.					
22. School staff teaches my child about respect for different cultures.					

23. My child's teachers enforce classroom and school rules.					
24. Teachers give my child individual help when he or she needs it.					
25. The school offers opportunities for me to volunteer or help in the school.					
26. The school communicates its goals effectively to me.					
27. My child's school makes it easy for me to attend meetings (for example holding them at different times of the day or providing child care).					
28. Teachers provide me with feedback on my child's progress including suggestions for improvement.					
29. My child sees his/her culture and family respectfully portrayed in school learning materials, signs, and displays.					
30. School staff contacts me when my child is struggling academically.					
31. My child is learning what he or she needs to know to succeed in later grades or after graduating from high school.					
32. School staff uses the information I provide to help my child.					
33. The school works with community organizations to support my child.					
34. The school helps to connect my family with community resources.					
35. Academics are the primary focus at my child's school.					
36. Teachers challenge my child to work hard and become successful.					
37. School staff works with me to meet my child's needs.					

38. The school provides opportunities for me to learn more about the school.					
39. Teachers make adjustments to meet my child's needs.					
40. Teachers understand and support my child's learning style.					
41. School staff values my child's opinions.					
42. School staff recognizes my child's accomplishments.					
43. School staff treats my child fairly.					
44. Community volunteers work regularly with my child's school.					
45. I know how to get my student what she or he needs to be successful in school.					
46. As a parent, I know who to speak to at the school if my child is being bullied.					
47. My child's teachers respond promptly to me when I have a question or concern about my child.					
48. My child feels encouraged to attend school.					

Appendix G

Research Report: Cold Spring School District College Readiness Report

Cold Spring School District College Readiness Report Cold Spring School District

Introduction

In November of 2013, Cold Spring School District contracted with The DSA Group, Inc. to interview recent high school graduates to find out what they believe contributed to their high school success. Researchers created an interview protocol that asked students to explain how they learned about college, to assess their college preparation and college readiness, and to determine the areas students believe they could be better prepared. Staff members at the school district provided The DSA Group with a list of 28 recent high school graduates and researchers began attempting to contact the graduates by phone in early December. Researchers initially requested video interviews but, if the graduate was unwilling or unavailable, then our team requested phone interviews.

Issues with Data Collection

Overall, response rates were low. Although the school district and high school attempted to provide additional students and encouraged others to participate, researchers only succeeded in conducting 7 interviews (2 video and 5 phone). For the 28 graduates, Cold Spring School District provided contact information for parents, rather than students, as that was all that was available. In some cases, parents were reluctant to provide researchers with contact information for their children. Some parents cited concerns that it would interrupt their children from studying for finals or other exams. Others offered to provide their children with the contact information for the researchers and let them follow up. However, few students contacted researchers. In other cases, many parents were not reachable. Researchers attempted to call multiple times at different times of day, leaving voicemails whenever possible. However, few parents returned phone calls. In other cases, students volunteered for video interviews but ultimately were not interviewed. One student came to the high school during the interviews but school staff members were unaware of the interviews and sent the student away. This student declined attempts for a follow up interview. In another case, two students canceled their interview the day before, citing a lack of interest. Another student canceled on the day of the interview, indicating that because of attended Running Start, there was little information to provide about the high school.

Results

Overall, students reported that the advanced classes at the high school prepared them well for classes at their colleges. Students noted the English and mathematics classes were especially effective at teaching them skills and knowledge that helped them excel in

college. In learning about college entrance requirements and about specific colleges, students reported that the counselors were helpful, but often they had to take their own initiative to learn about college. Students explained that if you did not seek out help or advice from staff members then you did not learn much. According to students, there was not a college-going culture prevalent in the school, and they suggested that many students, especially those who did not enroll in advanced classes, did not have the support more motivated students did have. Students suggested more outreach from counselors and other staff members would have been helpful. Finally, students noted that their understanding of the college experience was often lacking. Students had to learn simple things, like when to go to the dining hall, on their own. They suggested that a better understanding of what it meant to live on campus would have been helpful.

The following sections detail the findings from the interviews. In addition, we have provided recommendations based on student comments.

How Prepared Were You for College?

All graduates who were interviewed reported that the high school prepared them well or fairly well, specifically in English and mathematics. The students who took Advanced Placement (AP) classes at the high school said they helped prepare them for college level coursework. As one graduate explained, "[the High School] prepared me really well, especially the math teachers I had. My Calculus and Algebra teachers were very important in my understanding of the math I'm going through now." Another alumnus shared, "Our English program is spectacular. They are doing a wonderful job… My professors have told me I'm doing graduate level writing. That's how well [the high school] is preparing us." Another student shared that the STEM program offered at [the high school] was helpful. "All we learned our junior year of high school, we went over in my Introduction to Biology college course."

While students said most of their classes were helpful, some had issues around the timing of courses and the lack of opportunities later in high school. When asked to identify areas where they could have used additional support, one interviewee shared:
One thing that would have helped would have been if [the high school] offered Advanced Placement Chemistry, but that's the only thing I can think of…I think you take Chemistry your sophomore year, and by the time you graduate, you pretty much forget everything. And when you get up into UW, you talk to kids who took AP everything and they seem pretty prepared. Similarly, another graduate said:

I was disappointed in my high school chemistry class. Being in my major, I have to take a lot of chemistry. I'm in my second chemistry class now and I really feel like I didn't learn anything in high school. The conversations we had were very solid, but we didn't even touch on the basic principles of chemistry in high school. That was hard to adjust to and I've had to do extra catch up in that area.

How Did You Learn about College?

When graduates were asked how they learned about college, they perceived they could access information from the counselors and found them to be helpful; however, students did not mention a comprehensive program to help them become college aware and to learn all the requirements. One graduate stated, "A lot [of support] was provided by our counseling center…What was most useful to me for planning classes and meeting requirements to enter, was the one-on-one time with the counselors. Our counselors did an excellent job of making sure every student talked to them." In most cases, graduates reported taking the initiative to find information, to access counselors, and to attend college fairs. One graduate explained, "I always assumed that after high school I had to go to college. I did my own research and got a few things from the counselor's office."

Another graduate found the college fair to be helpful, "I was kind of shy to talk to the recruiters—I didn't know what to ask. I definitely think talking to a recruiter is a good place to learn about the colleges and what you're interested in and what they have to offer you because each person needs a different sort of college." While most graduates were satisfied with the amount of support they received from [the] High School, others disclosed they did not receive enough and a few reported they did not use the school's resources at all. One graduate commented, "I really didn't use the school that much. I decided I was going to [the University of Washington] and didn't need to get any help from the counselors."

When graduates were asked to what extent they knew about college entrance requirements while in high school, most reported being well-informed. One graduate explained, "My guidance counselor helped me a lot with understanding all the requirements and filling out the applications. I knew that it was important to take classes that would prepare me for college." Many of the graduates reported having little apprehension about college entrance requirements because they already knew what they needed to accomplish, as described by one graduate, "I knew I needed the SAT. I looked up what UW required when I was a sophomore, but I didn't talk to any of the counselors. I was taking advanced classes and a full load anyway so I wasn't worried about what I needed to take." No students specifically discussed Navigation 101, although this is an advisory program designed to help prepare students for entrance into college.

What Would Have Better Prepared you for College?

When asked what would have better prepared them for college, the interviewed alumni had various responses. Some graduates stated that more autonomy in their high school classes would have better prepared them for independently managing their college assignments. One graduate explained:

Perhaps a little more self-directed study would have better prepared me. Teachers in high school tell you the assignment and exactly what you need to do, but my college professors are vague… Here, I see open-ended curriculum. We have to get all this stuff done in the quarter. We have to choose when to accomplish each part of it. There are benchmark deadlines set throughout the term, but with a lot of the assignments, I hear about them for ten minutes and that's all we talk about it for the entire quarter.

In addition, some interviewees stated how learning more about time and stress management would have helped them be more prepared for college. One interviewee said, “Something that is huge for me is time management. I think high school seniors have to realize classes are going to be more intense…That’s an important thing to be prepared for, as opposed to coming into college without a feeling of how to stay organized and manage what you need to be doing.” Another alumnus stated:

I wish I had realized how much preparation needs to go into each individual class. I was used to 6-8 hours of homework a day, but I wasn’t prepared for how in-depth I need to go into each class, specifically. In high school, it was “read this page” or “do this problem,” but now, in college, it’s about understanding… It takes more time to be able to do that. It’s not something you can sit down and be done within an hour.

Other students suggested that having opportunities to take more electives in high school would have helped them be more aware of different interests or areas of study in college. “One thing I didn’t like [in high school] was I couldn’t take art because I was always in band, and I always wanted to do art… I know there are restrictions to how many electives students can take, but that variability to do more than one thing is important,” explained one interviewee.

Most graduates shared that, while in high school, a better understanding of the various social components of college would have better prepared them for the college experience. One student suggested that the high school offer more student leadership opportunities, while another said they would have liked to know more about “the new stresses of living on your own”, such as paying for food, buying household items, and dealing with loneliness. “I wish I had known how hard it was going to be to be away from home,” shared one high school graduate. Another student said, “I would definitely encourage high school graduates to get involved as soon as they can when they get to college. If you don’t have friends in college, it makes it that much harder. You can get really lonely.”
Conclusion

Overall, the graduates interviewed expressed satisfaction with how high school prepared them for college. All of the students took advanced classes and were highly motivated to attend college. Many took advantage of school counselors and other support at school to learn about and apply to colleges. However, all students who were interviewed suggested they were already motivated to attend college and reported through family support and their own perseverance, they were able to learn about and prepare for college. Not every student at the high school has the same motivation. As one interviewee commented, “In our district, we need motivation for students in lower level classes. I think our teachers do a fantastic job of including upper level students in everything…My impression is that students who aren’t taking the advanced courses are not being held to the same standards.” Therefore, to help the school district and high school staff better understand how to prepare students for college, it may be helpful to understand why some students do not attend or drop out of college.

Recommendations

One area of concern for some interviewees was parent involvement in the college preparation process. One interviewee asked, “What if the kids don’t have the parents to prepare them?” With this in mind, we recommend staff at the high school brainstorm ways to share information about college requirements with caregivers and to include them in college readiness practices, so as to increase the college bound climate for all students. Information sessions on preparing for college, choosing the right college, and financing college would all be helpful for parents. This can begin as early as middle school to help parents and students understand early grants and scholarships they can apply for before their junior or senior years. In addition, many schools have noted that providing food for these meetings often motivates families to attend. It may also be helpful to hold information sessions in the community, rather than at the school. For example, a community center or a large apartment complex where many families live would be a good venue for reaching out to families.

We also recommend working on developing a college-going culture throughout the building. Although the school is implementing the Navigation 101 program, an advisory curriculum designed to help prepare students for post-secondary education, students did not mention the program in preparing them for college. We recommend the school review the curriculum for Navigation 101 and how it is motivating students and helping them understand college expectations. In addition, we recommend the school actively encourage students of every level to attend college. Making them aware of pathways to college, trade schools, and other post-secondary options is essential for developing the culture. Equally important is setting high academic expectations and providing support for them inside and out of the classroom. Students noted that expectations for college attendance did not appear consistent for all students, particularly for students who were not taking advanced classes.

Finally, many of the students in college now commented that they could have used more understanding of campus life. For example, one student said understanding the campus dining hall and when to get food would have helped. We recommend the high school organize a short seminar near the end of the school year or during the summer for students attending college next fall. The high school can invite past graduates to speak to students and share insights and tips for the students. Alternatively, staff members can revise the Navigation 101 program to include these aspects of college life and help introduce students to living outside of their homes. Units on budgeting, grocery shopping, and time management would also be useful in preparing students for college life.

Appendix H

Research Report: Cold Spring School District Education Initiatives Project Research Report

Cold Spring School District Education Initiatives Project: Research Report

Introduction

Over the past year, The DSA Group has provided ongoing consultation to Cold Spring education stakeholders to develop and implement an action plan focused on the Student Achievement Initiative. Through the Student Achievement Initiative stakeholders will enable Cold Spring students to succeed in college and ultimately a meaningful career. The overall goal is for 60% of Cold Spring graduates to earn a 4-year degree. The goal of this report is to provide relevant research and analysis of place based program outcomes emphasizing effective support structures and emerging promising practices relating to college and career readiness, in addition to interpreting current outcomes of the West/Coffman Scholarship.

Research Focus

This research project focused on the following areas:

Provide summary analysis of the College Bound and College Success Foundation Studies while synthesizing relevant findings, best practices, and recommendations.
Review the Upjohn Institutes recent work on Place based programs. Focus on support structures and initiatives of these programs which influence student success.
Review the Upjohn Institutes research regarding the potential link between a strong educational system and community economic development.
Assess the effectiveness of the West/Coffman Scholarship and College Bound enrollment.
Provide a summary listing of college funding programs for Cold Spring students.

Data Sources

To address the research focus areas, researchers gathered data from multiple sources. The DSA Group, Inc. has completed the following research activities, which are listed below and are described in more detail throughout the report.

Synthesis of College Bound and Achievers Scholarship Evaluation Reports. Researchers conducted a summary analysis and synthesis of relevant findings from two evaluation reports produced by The DSA Group. These reports are *The College Bound Scholarship Program* and *College Success Foundation: 10-Year Follow-up Study.*

Review of Promise Scholarship Research. Researchers reviewed research conducted by the Upjohn Institute regarding promise scholarships, specifically addressing support

systems and initiatives that influence outcomes and the role of education systems on community economic development.

Analysis of College Enrollment and Graduation Data. We analyzed college attendance and graduation data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). This included information on students' enrollment in college directly and indirectly after high school; their choice of 2-year vs. 4-year institution; and whether they graduated college with a 2 or 4 year degree. A list of past West/Coffman Scholarship recipients was provided by the Cold Spring Foundation.

Search of College Funding Programs. Researchers conducted a comprehensive internet search of college funding programs available to Washington State students. While the list of individual one-time scholarships is vast, researchers limited the summary to programs that provide multiyear funding covering at least a moderate amount of college tuition/attendance costs.

College Bound Scholarship Program and Achievers Scholars Report Synthesis

This section provides a summary review of two studies, *College Success Foundation: 10-Year Follow-up Study* and *College Bound Scholarship Program,* conducted by The DSA Group and synthesis of promising practices and contextual factors from these reports. The recommendation summary includes one additional study, *The Navigation 101 4 Year Study.*

College Bound Scholarship Program Summary[4]

The College Bound Scholarship program was designed to make college more affordable and accessible for low-income students, to raise educational attainment, and to create a college going culture in Washington State. The purpose of this report is to understanding the impact of the College Bound Scholarship for the 2012 graduates, the first cohort to use the scholarship.

Since the onset of the program, the middle schools have been successful at signing up students for the scholarship. For the first cohort (2012 graduates), 57% of eligible students signed up for the scholarship, and by the fifth cohort (2016 graduates), 80% of eligible students signed up for the scholarship. Despite this success in signing up students, students and stakeholders report that college preparatory support in the secondary schools varies considerably, and for the most part, it is not available often enough. College level supports are developing as well. The findings show that high schools that have had success in students using the College Bound Scholarship and attending college were more intentional in the support for College Bound Scholars, with a greater focus on college preparation. In addition, these schools had staff members who were knowledgeable about the College Bound Scholarship, were able to track students' progress towards meeting the requirements, and worked with students at each grade level to prepare students for college.

[4] This section of the report is taken directly from the College Bound Scholarship Research Report.

The results from the first cohort of students show that College Bound Scholars had greater odds of meeting college admission requirements compared to students who received free and reduced lunch and compared to their non-free and reduced lunch peers when controlling for other variables. Similarly, the College Bound Scholarship recipients had higher odds of enrolling in college and persisting into their second year compared to students who received free and reduced lunch and compared to their non-free and reduced lunch peers when controlling for other variables.

Our statistical analyses examined both school and student level predictors of college enrollment, college persistence through the first year, and college persistence into the second year. While there were some variations across the analyses, there were also some consistent patterns. Among the school level variables, we found a relationship between a school's participation in Navigation 101 and students' enrollment in college, persistence through the first year, and persistence into the second year. Among the student level variables, we found that Black and Asian American students had greater odds of enrolling in college and persisting through the first and second year of college than White Students. High school preparedness was also a significant predicator of enrollment and persistence, with math, science, foreign language, and social studies emerging as strong predicators. Furthermore, Running Start and AP/IB course taking also predicted greater outcomes. Finally, students' GPA was generally the strongest predictor of enrollment and persistence.

Overall, results from the first cohort of students show promise. The College Bound Program was designed as an early promise to help motivate students to pursue a college degree and to provide some financial support to attend college. While there was no funding for a comprehensive program of support at the middle school, high school, and college levels, these are beginning to emerge in response to the program needs. That said an analysis of schools that had high rates of students signing up for the scholarship and using the scholarship compared to schools with low rates of sign-ups and usage in the first year were strikingly different. Schools that were successful in sign-ups and usage were more intentional in the support for College Bound Scholars despite the lack of support and had a greater focus on college preparation. In addition, these schools had staff members who were knowledgeable about the College Bound Scholarship, were able to track students' progress towards meeting the requirements, and worked with students at each grade level to prepare students for college.

Achievers Scholars Program Summary[5]

This report provides a retrospective study of the impact of the College Success Foundation's implementation of Washington State Achievers program on participants and on participating high schools. In 2010, 10 years of grant funding for new scholarships and support programs in the Achievers high schools concluded, and the College Success Foundation was interested in learning more about the impact of the program. The participants for this study fall into three groups: (1) Achievers Scholarship Recipients versus Non-Recipients, (2) Achievers High School versus Comparison High Schools; and (3) high and low performing Achievers High. Researchers collected quantitative data from all high schools and conducted site visits to gather qualitative data at 10 Achievers

[5] This section of the report is taken directly from the Achievers Scholars Research Report.

High Schools, including the five schools with the most positive outcomes and the five schools with the least positive outcomes.

Sixteen high schools received grants, including 11 large schools and 5 small schools (under 400 students). These grants provided support to convert the large high schools into small learning communities of no more than 400 students and for all schools to redesign or "reinvent" the schools so that all students graduate ready to enter a four-year college. The large schools had the double task of conversion and reinvention, while the small schools were responsible for reinvention only.

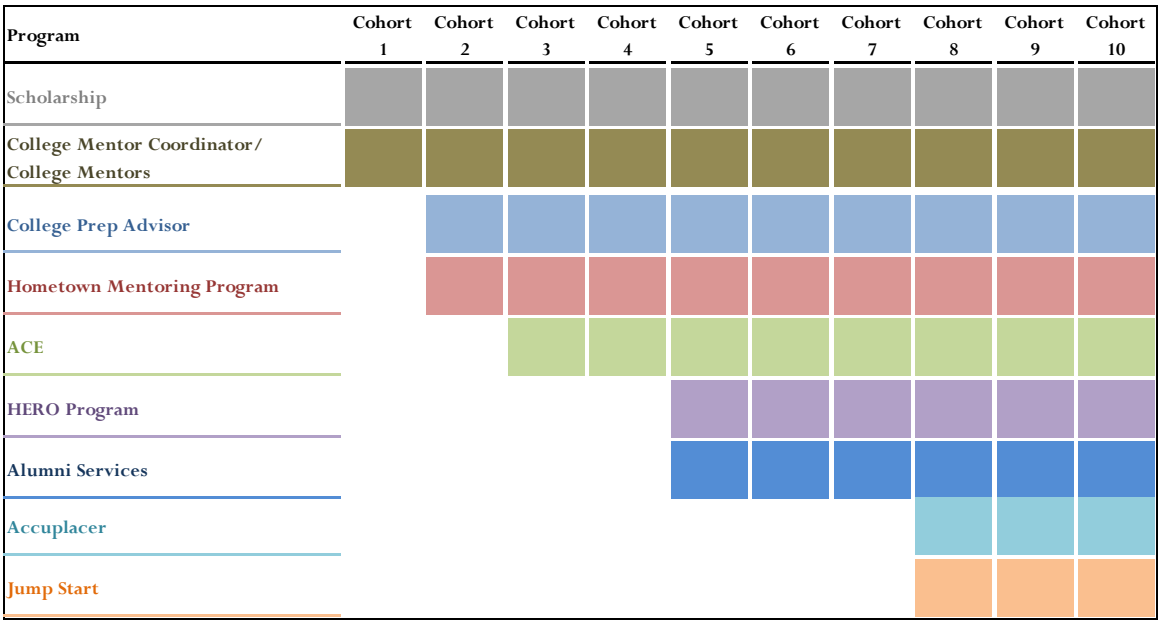
As a part of the reinvention, schools were expected to "reflect seven key attributes: common focus, high expectations, personalized learning environments, respect and responsibility, time to collaborate, performance-based systems, and technology as a tool. Schools were to emphasize relationships – between students and their work, between students and their teachers, and the relationships among staff." Likewise, schools focused on classroom instruction to reflect high levels of active inquiry, in-depth learning, and performance assessment.[6]

Along with the whole school reinvention, the College Success Foundation provided scholarships and support to over 500 graduating students per year. This program included two parts: (1) the selection of recipients and administration of the scholarships, and (2) the implementation and management of an academic support program for students once they received the scholarships in their junior year through college. This second program component involved the assignment of mentors to students in their junior year of high school, as well as coordinating transitions to college. Throughout the 10 years, College Success Foundation personnel continued to improve upon and expand their support services. In most cases, the support services a student in an early cohort received differ greatly from the support services a student in a later cohort received because of how that particular service evolved. Table 1 displays the support services that students received. Each support service is also described in more detail below.

Table 1.

College Success Foundation Academic Support Program

[6] Quotations in this section are taken from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation website, education division http://www.gatesfoundation.org/learning/ed/default/htm.



The findings revealed stronger outcomes for Achievers Scholarship Recipients compared to Non-Recipients in meeting high school course requirements for college admission. For the Achievers Scholarship Recipients, the percentage of students meeting HEC Board requirements increased for each ethnic/racial group, particularly for Black students. Scholarship Recipients were more likely to attend college within a year of graduation high schools compared to Non-Recipients. Further, a greater percentage of Recipients attended four-year colleges as compared to two-year colleges. Non-Recipients were more likely to attend two-year colleges than four-year colleges. Recipients were more likely to persist in college compared to their Non-Recipient counterparts. Comparisons between the Achievers Schools and Comparison Schools found greater improvement in the rates at which students attended college within one year for students at the Achievers Schools.

An analysis of the common characteristics of the top five improving high schools show these schools were qualitatively different than those from the bottom five. Several key characteristics were evident in the top five improving schools, including a focus on second order change. In the most improving schools, educators continually reviewed the reasons to create a college ready culture, developed a clear vision for college readiness, and then aligned interventions to support this vision. The top five schools also integrated College Success Foundation program elements and other support strategies it to the school. The program elements were not “add-ons” for “some students” but rather a comprehensive program for all students. Finally, school personnel at the five most improving schools described how they are trying to increase rigor and remove obstacles to gate-keeping courses to help get students college ready.

Emerging Promising Practices

The emerging promising practices from both studies were similar. Overall these practices focused on developing a college and career readiness culture and strong support system to prepare all students. Five main themes emerged:

Systemic plan of college and career readiness within schools and communities. This practice involves developing a clear and specific plan shared across the entire school district and within the community focusing on preparing students for college and careers. A systemic plan allows students exposure to a consistent message at every point in their education while developing targeted skills along the way, and supported by various programs and resources to meet expected outcomes. For the Achievers Scholar Program, selected high schools reformed the learning community, implemented several college and career readiness focused programs, and had dedicated staff to support Achievers Scholars.

A common understanding of high expectations and resources to meet expectations. Throughout both studies, students repeatedly stated they were not prepared for the rigor of college work or conversely, students who were exposed to higher levels of rigor in high school stated they were better able to manage their college work. Specifically, students who took part in Running Start, Advanced Placement classes, or other college level coursework were exposed to rigorous work prior to college. Additionally, students attributed high expectations of various teachers as beneficial in developing good study habits and building their personal confidence in the caliber of work they could accomplish. When students and teachers share a common understanding of high expectations coupled with the availability of rigorous course/programs students can better prepare for college level work.

Availability of College and Career Readiness Programs/Experiences. An intuitive finding from both reports was scholars identified one of the best ways to help make a successful transition to college was to specifically prepare them for college beforehand. Scholars who took part in college and career readiness programs and had exposure to college experiences were better prepared for college. For example, many scholars found simply visiting a college campus as highly impactful. As part of the Achievers Program a variety of programs were implemented targeting student needs including mentoring and ongoing workshops (i.e., Achievers College Experience Program, Hometown Mentoring Program,). Additionally, scholars with advisory or other college preparation classes such as Navigation 101, GEAR UP, and TRIO, which taught organizational and time management skills was valuable. Through all these programs, scholars also had the opportunity to have an ongoing conversation about college and a career readiness.

Dedicated staff to assist students through college selection and application process and progress monitoring. The implementation of College Preparatory Advisors in Achievers high schools was sited by scholars and staff as one of the most important components of the program. College Preparatory Advisors were able to gather relevant student data in real-time to provided targeted support to students throughout high school. Similarly, while College Bound Scholars typically did not have assigned staff to help them, at the top performing schools there was typically a point person in place assigned to assist the

scholars. Students reported that working with a school counselor or teacher who helped them navigate the college selection and application process was necessary to their college enrollment.

Ongoing support during college. Finally, as students make the transition into college, having support system/college personnel on campus to help navigate the many changes of the new environment contributed to college persistence. Scholars who connected with college support staff were invited to social engagements with other scholars, received course taking/financial aid counseling, and connected to support services such as, tutoring. Achievers scholars had support through the College Mentoring Program while College Bound Scholars were less likely to have organized college-level support. However, college-level personnel were beginning discussions to determine what support should be provided to the College Bound Scholars.

Contextual Issues

While many of the contextual issues are simply the reverse of what helped schools improve and lead to promising practices there are two contextual issues worth noting as Cold Spring School District strives to develop initiatives to improve outcomes around college. These contextual issues are buy-in and the transition from high school to college.

Buy-in at every level. Both reports consistently identified the influence lack of buy-in at any level (i.e., leadership, staff, students, and parents) had on student outcomes. A key component of creating a school-wide college and career readiness culture or making progress towards second order change requires that all stakeholders understand, believe in, and actively support the work. Many schools struggled with buy-in at some level, which ultimately, slowed the progress of their anticipated change or in some cases, halted it altogether.

Transition from high school to college. As described over several sections of promising practices, preparing students for college can be highly influential to their success in college. In particular, this transition became a barrier when scholars reported taking multiple remedial courses before starting college level work, not understanding how to access college resources and services (i.e., financial aid, tutoring, course selection), and difficulty managing a school/work/life balance.

Recommendations

While there is no one agreed upon definition of "college readiness," there are similarities across definitions. One definition that is gaining popularity in the literature is by Conley (2014) who defines college readiness as:

The level of preparation a student needs in order to enroll and succeed – without remediation – in a credit bearing course at a postsecondary institution that offers a baccalaureate degree or transfer to a baccalaureate program, or in a high quality certificate program that enables students to enter a career pathway with potential future advancement.

According to Conley, the four keys to college and career readiness include developing: (1) Key Content Knowledge, (2) Key Cognitive Strategies, (3) Key Learning Skills and Techniques, and (4) Key Transition Knowledge and Skills. Similarly, within Washington State, The DSA Group defined the three elements that comprise College Readiness as college awareness, college eligibility, and college preparation (Baker, Clay, & Gratama, 2005).

To define what constitutes appropriate college readiness services, we used the definitions of college readiness above, reviewed the literature, and drew information from three evaluation projects that were conducted by The DSA Group in Washington State. The three projects include the College Success Foundation: Achievers 10-Year Follow-Up Study (2012); the Navigation 101 Year 4 Evaluation (2013); and the College Bound Scholarship Program Research Project (2014).

Schools around the country are instituting a variety of "college-readiness" programs to help prepare students for the rigors of higher education. Researchers have identified these four recommendations as the most critical for helping students matriculate from high school to college. They help students prepare academically and socially for college and have proven effective at lowering attrition rates for college students. Among these are:

Dedicated college advisors
College and career awareness program
Transition curricula
Summer bridge programs

Dedicated College Advisors. College advisors are an invaluable tool in preparing students for college and helping with the transition. Advisors differ from school counselors because they serve a much smaller number of students and their entire focus is on the college transition and academic preparation, whereas school counselors have many administrative duties on top of working directly with students. A college advisor can help students succeed in high school, prepare for college admission, complete college applications and financial aid forms, and transition to college.

For example, the College Success Foundation's Achievers Scholars used a dedicated college advisor, called a College Preparatory Advisor. These advisors helped guide students through the college application process, took them on campus visits, assigned mentors, and provided academic advising. Of all the program elements within the Achievers Scholarship Program, scholarship recipients reported that having a dedicated person onsite at the school was the most critical aspect of the scholarship, with some suggesting this was more important than the scholarship itself. In an analysis of the variability and effectiveness of the program, researchers found that the most meaningful support occurred when the advisors "took most of the initiative, provided practical information and resources, were supportive and caring, shared something of themselves, helped them understand what college was like, and maintained regular contact" (Baker, Gratama, Bachtler, & Peterson, 2012).

Similarly, the Navigation 101 program within Washington State is showing some promise, and a critical component within the program is a dedicated advisor. This program is designed to increase college awareness among students, and one school staff member works with a small group of students to provide college awareness information and to guide students through the college eligibility process. While there were variations in advisors' skills, when advisors have the proper training and knowledge, students reported a strong desire to attend college and reported that the advisor was critical in helping them prepare for college (Baker, Gratama, Brenner, & Law, et al, 2013).

Conversely, the College Bound Scholarship provides funding for students to attend college, but does not provide support, such as a dedicated staff person assigned to students to help them become college ready. While schools had school counselors and some support programs, the depth and frequency of this support varied. Researchers found that when school provided dedicated services to College Bound Scholars more students signed up for and used the College Bound Scholarship (Baker, Gratama, Ford, & Chighizola, et al, 2013). Students also reported that lack of access to a school counselor and lack of adequate information about the scholarship were barriers to using the scholarship.

College and Career Awareness Programs. College and Career Awareness programs take a variety of forms, but the majority provide some lessons on social and academic skills and knowledge needed for college, development of organizational skills such as note taking and using planners, goal setting, and post-secondary planning. They can take the form of an elective class or an advisory period curriculum.

One such program is Navigation 101, a comprehensive curriculum for college and career readiness that is prevalent in Washington State. The DSA Group did a four-year evaluation of the program in Washington State and found that, "Overall, the program has made an impact in many schools and made gains in helping students become more college and career aware" (Baker, et al., 2013). The program consists of advisory classes (with a dedicated advisor), student portfolios, student-led conferences, student-informed scheduling (providing dual credit courses), and data collection. The program is flexible enough to meet the needs and resources of specific schools. For example, some schools held advisory once a month while others had daily advisory classes.

One major benefit of College and Career Awareness Programs is the creation of a college-going culture at the school. Teachers and other staff members regularly remind students about the expectation that they will attend college, and there are visual reminders, such as banners and T-shirts, throughout the school. The college-going culture is most effective when it includes *all* students, especially the students who do not normally attend college or do not believe they can attend college.

Transition Curricula. Transition curricula are "courses, learning modules, or online tutorials developed jointly by secondary and postsecondary faculty and offered no later than 12th grade to students at risk of being placed into remedial math or English in college" (Barnett, Fay, Trimble, & Pheatt, 2013). When combined with college-readiness

assessments, such as COMPASS or the ACT, transition curricula can help prepare students for the content and teaching styles of college courses. According to the authors of the report, "strong collaboration between the K-12 and higher education sectors in developing these initiatives is essential for ensuring that the skills and knowledge taught and assessed in high school are well aligned with those needed for success in college."

An effective transition curriculum in English focuses on non-fiction texts. Introducing high school students to texts from the social sciences, such as psychology or sociology, and helps prepare them for college expectations. In math, the content differs. Some courses are offered in conjunction with other courses, such as Algebra II, while others are independent of core classes. Typically, these math classes will cover fewer topics but go deeper in depth with each one. Transition curricula are especially effective for students who have met high school graduation requirements but are not prepared for Advance Placement or other dual credit classes.

Teachers who implement transition curricula are often selected for the program because of their openness to the student-centered learning required of them. This is an essential component of the classes – students direct much of their own learning, similar to expectations in colleges. Many programs offer professional development for teachers to help align high school teaching with college-level instruction.

Washington State is in process of developing transition courses in math and English that align with the above recommendations. These programs, called Bridge to College Math and Bridge to College English have been piloted in Washington State in the 2014 – 2015 school year, with a number of schools receiving grants to implement the programs in the 2015 – 2016 school year. Because of a unique partnership with K – 12, higher education leaders, and a legislative agreement, students who take these classes in their senior year and receive a B or better, they will be exempt from having to test into a college level placement. This agreement is in place for three years, with plans to study the program and scale the program statewide, depending upon successful outcomes.

Summer Bridge Programs. Summer Bridge programs are intensive four to six week programs designed to help students who are not prepared academically to succeed in college. They provide lessons in reading, math, and writing, as well as an introduction to the social and general academic skills needed to succeed in college. By combining accelerated, targeted lessons with tutors and other support services, colleges believe bridge programs will help close the achievement gap and reduce college attrition rates.

The National Center for Postsecondary Research funded an evaluation of eight summer bridge programs in Texas. They used an experimental design to compare the outcomes of students enrolling in summer bridge programs and those not enrolling. They found that students who attended summer bridge programs were more likely to pass college-level courses in math and writing in the subsequent fall, and that students were more likely to attempt higher-level courses in English/Language Arts and mathematics (Washington, et al., 2011).

Within the Achievers Program, the College Success Foundation offered a JumpStart Program as an enhancement in the last three years of the Achievers Grant. In this program, students were assessed using AccuPlacer™ to determine if they were eligible for college level coursework in math or English. Students would use this information to determine the necessary college preparatory coursework required in their senior year, and students who needed additional support could participate in a JumpStart program between the summer of their senior year and the beginning of college. Since this enhancement was only offered in the last three years of the Achievers Program, there is limited data showing the effectiveness. However, participants believe the data helped students become more realistic about their college preparation needs and that the program contributed to a better start in their first year of college (Baker et. al, 2012).

Research Review of Place based Scholarships and Community Effects

The DSA Group conducted a review of the current research performed by the Upjohn Institute related to Place Based Programs. The vast majority of the Upjohn Institute's past and current published research is focused on the Kalamazoo Promise (KP). However, there are a series of research studies, resources, and new partnerships currently in progress, which will provide greater depth to Place Based Program research and be of particular interest to the Cold Spring Foundation. Specifically, the Upjohn Institute received a grant from the Lumina Foundation last year to create the Promise Research Consortium. The grant enables the consortium to carry out a two-year comparative research agenda focusing on post-secondary and community-level outcomes of Place based programs. Additionally, the Upjohn Institute is slated to release the publication, *Promise Nation: Transforming Communities through Promise Scholarships* by Michelle Miller-Adams this spring.

The current research and findings for Place Based Programs was described in a recent presentation by Upjohn Institute researcher Michelle Miller-Adams at the 2014 PromiseNet Conference, stating they currently know very little about Place Based Program outcomes and research is very limited and largely non-comparative. While approximately 50 communities across the country have adopted promise style programs, there are potential drawbacks as the field of Place Based Programs continue to develop. These drawbacks include Place Based Program replication without empirical background studies; Place Based Program replication without a clear understanding of how program design relates to program goals; inability to provide stakeholders Place Based Program data and findings because programs are still in the beginning implementation stage; and finally, there is a danger that place based programs will overpromise and under deliver. However, short term findings across place based programs indicate a trend of positive outcomes including increased student morale and positive school coverage. In many cases, place based programs have influenced school district student enrollment both in K-12 and college, Advance Placement course availability and enrollment, and student persistence through the first year of college.[7]

[7] https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/04/07/promise-programs-thrive-despite-unanswered-questions-about-long-term-effects-and

Data from other place-based scholarships suggests that college enrollment and persistence are higher among program participants relative to their peers (e.g., Dynarski, 2005). For example, 90% of eligible students in the first cohort of the Kalamazoo Place Based Program attended college and 67% finished their degrees after six years (Mack, 2012). Similarly, approximately 80% of participants in the Oklahoma Promise scholarship attend college directly after high school as opposed to approximately 60% of all Oklahoma high school graduates (Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education, 2014). The persistence rate for program participants was also approximately 10 percentage points higher than the rate for non-participants. Data from Indiana's 21st Century Scholarship indicates that program participants were more likely to enroll in college than their peers but were slightly less likely to persist in college (St. John et al., 2005). Research on the Washington State Achievers Program (Baker, Gratama, Bachtler, & Peterson, 2012; Myers, Brown, & Pavel, 2010) showed that students enrolled in the program were more likely to enroll and persist in college than their peers. On the other hand, research on the Pittsburgh Promise (Bozick, Gonzalez, & Engberg, under review) showed that the overall college-going rate for scholarship-eligible students did not change before and after the advent of the program. After the Pittsburgh promise began, scholarship-eligible students were more likely to attend in-state colleges, where they received the subsidy, then out-of-state colleges, where they would not receive it. At present, there is little evidence to suggest that place-based scholarships increase college-going among students who would not have otherwise enrolled in college.

Early broad findings from the KP show their program has the potential to positively influence students, schools, and the overall community through increased enrollment suggesting a boost to the local economy, decreasing the racial achievement gap (Bartik, Eberts, & Huang, 2010), significantly impacting high school student behavior and GPA for African-Americans (Bartik & Lachowska, 2012), and increasing student college going and rigorous college choice (Adams & Timmeney, 2012).

The Cold Spring Foundation requested research regarding the support structures and initiatives needed to help students be successful in school and beyond. Additionally, the foundation is interested in learning about the relationship between a strong education system and community economic development efforts. One clear finding among the research is while funding does have an impact of educational attainment "money alone is insufficient for the Kalamazoo Promise or programs modeled after it to reach their full potential as engines of community transformation" (Miller-Adams, 2009). Upjohn Institute researchers found a clear conceptual understanding of how such a program can start social and economic change, alignment of change efforts by multiple stakeholders, and realistic shared expectations around short and long term goals are essential to successful implementation and sustainability.

Support Structures. KP research attributes strong collaborative community partnerships to positive change efforts. A key component to Kalamazoos community involvement is the universal nature of their place based program. Because the scholarship is open to everyone the potential for any negative pushback is eliminated and broad community support can be expected (Miller-Adams, 2009). Community organizations and

individuals provide a level of support to students that the financial scholarship does not address. One article described the depth of the Kalamazoos community involvement:

To date, the [Kalamazoo] Promise has catalyzed an ever-expanding number of groups, initiatives, and networks (both formal and informal), all of them expressions of community support for these objectives. From church-based mentoring and after-school credit recovery programs, to outreach by the local community colleges, to pro bono services offered by businesses, media companies, and others, the community has mobilized around the Kalamazoo Promise (Miller-Adams, pg. 20).

As more students are eligible to receive the KP there is increased need to help them become college ready, including supports such as college preparatory classes, advanced placement and dual enrollment courses, and tutoring.

Similarly, research about the Pittsburgh Promise cited support systems as a success component. Specifically, using college and career ready practices was associated with increased proportions of graduates eligible for the Pittsburgh Promise (Iriti & Bickel, 2009). Finally, another study analyzing merit versus universal place-based scholarships recommended communities considering a place-based scholarship adopt the characteristics of a universal program. When compared to merit programs researchers found universal scholarships provide a stronger benefit, by increasing college enrollment and completion, increasing school district enrollment and overall city population, and reducing poverty and racial inequalities (Bangs, Davis, Ness, Elliott, & Henry, 2011). Researchers also recommend reforming the entire district education system to provide comprehensive services for students from pre-birth through college. These services would target disadvantaged student and family health, social, economic, and education programs, i.e. nutrition, mental health counseling and mentoring/tutoring.

Additionally researchers retrieved relevant support system information from individual place based program websites. Promising practices from these sources were similar to outcomes found in the College Bound/Achievers Scholars synthesis. For example, a study examining factors that contribute to Pittsburgh Promise student post-secondary success identified six areas embedded in the literature that help high school students including: (1) rigorous teaching and learning,(2) emphasis on cross-curricular 21st century and soft skills, (3) a culture of high expectations for all students, (4) clear system to guide students through college selection and application process, (5) integrated approach of career and college planning, and (6) high level of personalism (Iriti & Bickel, 2009). The El Dorado Promise published a 2015 news brief of their specific focus on providing more rigor through increased AP course enrollment and offerings. Furthermore, El Dorado created a series of pre-AP courses at the middle schools to prepare students for AP course taking in high school. Current outcomes show student enrollment in AP courses has multiplied while maintaining and even increasing their AP passage rate.[8]

[8] Information retrieved online from: http://www.eldoradopromise.com/pdf/2015_PromiseReport.pdf

Community Level Effects. The Upjohn Institute conducted several short-term Kalamazoo community impact studies in recent years. The results show a positive shift in school enrollment and community perception indicating a place-based scholarship can have a socio-economic impact. A study following Kalamazoo Public School's highest achieving students attending Kalamazoo Math and Science Center showed a significant shift in college choice from private or out-of –state college options to in-state public institutions after the KP. The percentage of Kalamazoo Math and Science Center graduates "attending in-state public institutions rose from 38.6 percent before the Promise to 67.4 percent after the Promise, an increase of 28.7 percentage points" (Miller-Adams & Timmeney, pg. 4, 2013). Researchers noted a small sample size and took into account the slight increase for non-KP students over the same time period. However, the effect was still clearly evident. Study implications are students who attend in-state colleges are more likely to stay in-state post-graduation compared to students who went out-of-state for college, thus increasing the potential of college educated KP students contribution to the local economy post -graduation.

Similarly, researchers continued to follow the change in enrollment within Kalamazoo Public Schools since the KP. Overall, there has been a 40 percent increase in new students with no noticeable change in the socioeconomic characteristics of the school district (Hershbein, 2013). Additionally, "early results suggest that the Promise may have raised annual gross regional product in the area by one percent, or about $100 million."[9]

Regarding community perception, Upjohn Institute researchers found a significant increase in the volume of both education content produced and volume of positively focused education content ran by local media in Kalamazoo compared to a similar neighboring district since the KP (Miller-Adams & Fiore, 2013). Researchers attributed the change in media coverage to a change in community perception of Kalamazoo Public Schools as a result of the KP. Specifically, there was little evidence of a causal relationship between the change in media coverage and actual improvements within the school district as school improvements have been slower to materialize than the change in media coverage. Implications of this study show a shift in community perception towards the school district that was previously negative (whether based on factual evidence or not) and kept parents from enrolling their students in the public school or even caused some families to move away (Miller-Adams & Fiore, 2013). Overall, researchers caution stakeholders that it is too early to measure the economic development impacts potential influence by the KP or any other place based program at this early stage of implementation.

[9] Quote retrieved online from Upjohn Institutes research highlights http://www.upjohn.org/research-highlights/second-look-enrollment-changes-after-kalamazoo-promise

West/Coffman Scholarship Analysis

To determine whether the West/Coffman scholarship has influenced college attendance and graduation rates, researchers analyzed Cold Spring High School graduate data pertaining to college attendance rates and graduation rates of students utilizing the West/Coffman scholarship to non-scholarship users (see Figures 1 and 2).

Year over year, students who received the West/Coffman Scholarship were approximately 25 percentage-points more likely to attend college compared to students who did not receive the West/Coffman Scholarship. West/Coffman Scholarship students had an enrollment rate of approximately 90%, while Non-Scholarship students had an enrollment rate of approximately 65% (see Figure 1). The discrepancy between scholarship students and non-scholarship students widened when analyzing college graduation rates. For example, Figure 2 shows the class of 2004 had 89.2% of all scholarship students graduate from college anytime. The class of 2004 had 36.9% of students not receiving a scholarship graduate from college anytime. Finally, the third group shows that 50% of the students from the class of 2004 who did not receive a scholarship, but who did attend college graduated from college anytime. Please note that the decrease in college graduation rates is simply because let time has elapsed for students graduating in 2008 compared to students who graduated in 2004. Students who graduated in 2008 may still be continuing with college.

When interpreting the data it is important to note the potential influence of extraneous variables on the college attendance and graduation rates of scholarship versus non-scholarship students. For example, the West/Coffman Scholarship criteria of 2.5 or higher GPA[10] is aligned with college going and college persistence outcomes, meaning students who are selected to receive the scholarship may be more likely than their non-scholarship peers to be successful in college, regardless of the scholarship. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of these scholarships. However, when outcomes data become available from the College Bound Scholarship Program that will provide more information about the impact of similar types of scholarship programs.

[10] Information retrieved online from: http://Cold Spring -school-district.s3.amazonaws.com/wf-west-high-school/uploads/files/january_scholarships_2014.pdf

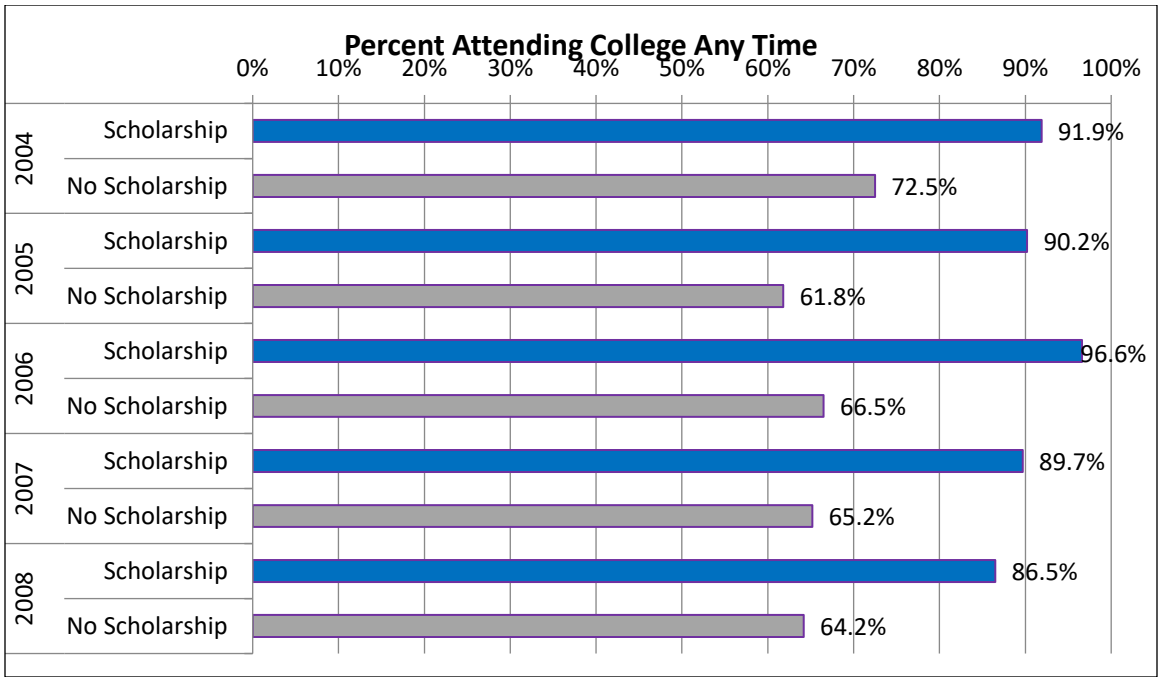


Figure 3. **Cold Spring High School Graduates from, 2004-2008, College Attendance Rates with West/Coffman Scholarship versus No Scholarship.**

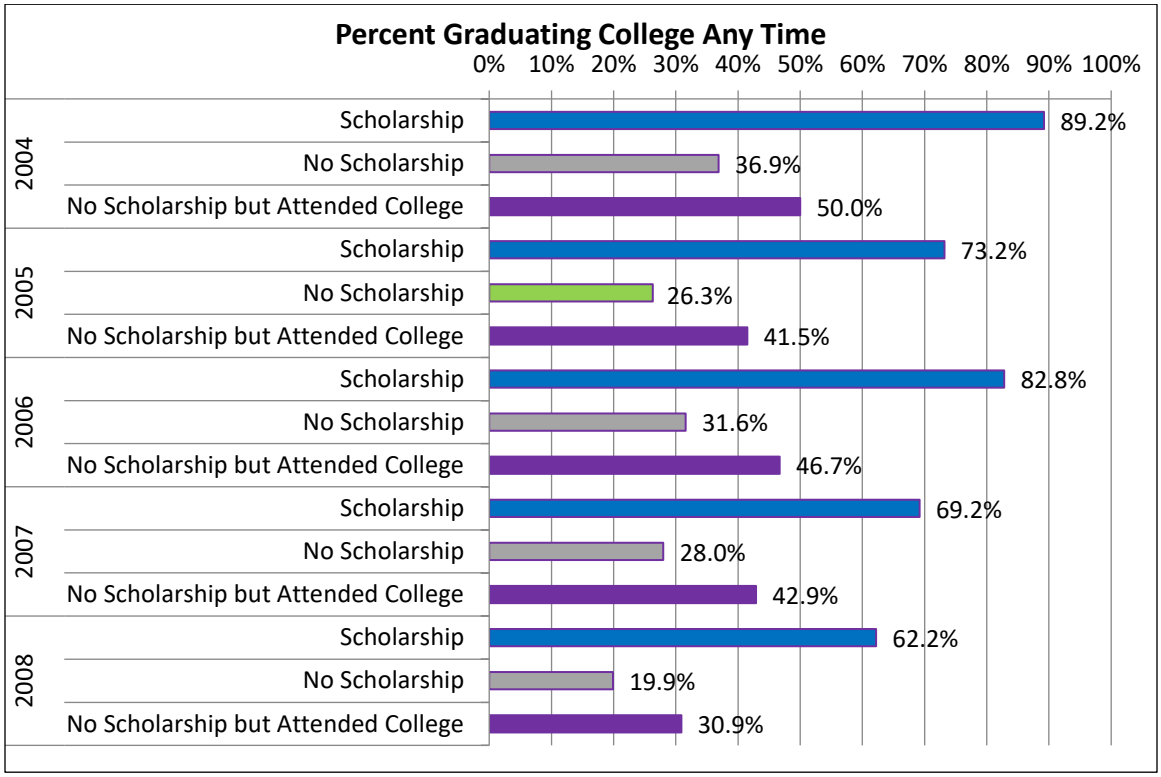


Figure 4. **Cold Spring High School Graduates from, 2004-2008, College Any Time Graduation Rates with West/Coffman Scholarship versus No Scholarship**

Summary Listing of College Funding Programs for Cold Spring Students
Below is a brief listing of college funding programs available to Cold Spring Students.
College Bound Scholarship. College Bound is an early commitment last dollar in tuition scholarship for students attending any eligible Washington State college institution.

Eligibility:
Students in foster care or dependents of the state are automatically enrolled
Sign up by end of 8th grade year
Graduate from a Washington high school or home school with at least a 2.0 G.P.A.
Good community standing and no felonies
Meet low-income cutoffs
File the FAFSA
Attend an eligible Washington State institution

What Program Can Cover:
Full-coverage tuition equivalent to a four-year bachelor's degree
$500 allowance for college books
Academic support services offered by schools and colleges

Pros:
Full-tuition coverage
Scholarship can be used over a 10 year period
Many schools and colleges offer special academic services to College Bound Scholars

Cons:
Only available for Washington State institutions
Students must sign up by 8th grade unless they are a foster child
http://www.wsac.wa.gov/college-bound

Cougar Commitment. The Washington State University's last dollar in scholarship offering tuition coverage for up to four years for students pursuing their first bachelor's degree at WSU.

Eligibility:
Washington State resident
Admitted to WSU as a fulltime student pursuing their first bachelor's degree
Receive the State Need or Pell Grant
Submit FAFSA and show financial need based on application
Maintain satisfactory academic progress
Not previously received Cougar Commitment for eight total semesters of continuous enrollment

What Grant Can Cover:
Full-coverage tuition equivalent to a four-year bachelor's degree

Pros:
Full-tuition coverage

Cons:
Only available for WSU students
http://admission.wsu.edu/scholarships/cougar-commitment.html#

Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) Program. GET is Washington's version of a 529 college savings plan. GET is a prepaid tuition program. Units are purchased at a premium

rate to lock in the guarantee of a student's future college tuition. The current price to purchase a unit is $172 and the current payout value of a unit is approximately $118. Up to 500 units can be purchased and each unit is redeemable for 1% of undergraduate tuition at the highest price in-state public university. One-hundred units are equal to one year of full-time college. Payment can be made as a lump sum or monthly. GET is one of only a few states with legislative backing to guarantee tuition payment in the event that the program is unable to supply funds.

Eligibility:
Washington State Resident
What GET Can Cover:
Guaranteed tuition coverage
Approved college expenses
Units can be used for up to 10 years past student high school graduation
Units can be used at any participating institution including instate, nationally, and other countries
Units can be used for graduate school
Unit plan can be transferred to another family member
Reimbursement can be requested if unit program is not used when student enters college
Pros:
Prepaid college tuition at fixed rates
Can be used for up to 10 years and transferred to other family members
Money is tax deductible
Cons:
Potential for units to go unused or be worth less than premium paid
Make payments before student goes to college
Some estimates indicated unit programs need to be open for at least six years before student begins college to financially break even on tuition cost
http://www.get.wa.gov/
http://www.get.wa.gov/pricepayoutfees

Husky Promise. The University of Washington's (UW) last dollar in scholarship offering full- tuition for up to 12 quarters for students pursuing their first bachelor's degree at UW.
Eligibility:
Washington State Resident
Admitted to UW and enroll fulltime
Submit FAFSA
Meet eligibility for State Need Grant or Pell Grant programs
Pursue first bachelor's degree
Maintain satisfactory academic progress at UW (maintain 2.0 G.P.A., complete 6 credits/quarter, etc.)
What Grant Can Cover:
Full-coverage tuition equivalent to a four-year bachelor's degree
Pros:
Full-tuition coverage
Cons:
Only available for UW students

http://www.washington.edu/huskypromise/

Other 529 College Savings Plans. While Washington only provides the GET program to Washington residents, many other states have similar programs that are open to non-residents. These college savings plans also offer students the capacity to attend college across the country. Some plans allow for greater flexibility, such as creating a savings plan for community college at a lower rate. For example, both Oregon and California offer multiple 529 plans for non-residents.
http://www.savingforcollege.com/529_plan_details/index.php?state_id=48&page=plans_by_state

Opportunity Grant Program. Provides grant money to attend Washington community or technical colleges for low-income family students.

Eligibility:
Washington State Resident Student
Student approved for grant-eligible program or 200% below federal poverty level
Financial need based on FAFSA
Maintain 2.0 G.P.A. at college

What Grant Can Cover:
Up to 45 credits used within three years
Tuition and fees up to $1,000/year for books and supplies
Variety of services including tutoring, academic services, emergency childcare and emergency transportation.

Pros:
Paid college
Non-tuition supports available

Cons:
Grant only applied to community or technical college
http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/s_opportunitygrants.aspx

Passport to College Promise Scholarship. Opportunity for foster youth to receive a scholarship for up to five years of college. Additionally, support services from college staff and priority for State Need Grant and State Work Study programs are considered.

Eligibility:
Washington State Resident
Spend at least one year in foster care in Washington State
Enroll at least part time in eligible college by 22nd birthday
Not pursue a degree in Theology
Pursuing first college degree

What Grant Can Cover:
Students can receive up to $4,500 per year for up to five years of college towards attending college
Support services from college staff
Priority consideration of State Grant Need and State Work Study program

Pros:
Money provided for attending college
Support services provided and priority consideration of other state assistance

Cons:
None
http://collegesuccessfoundation.org/wa/supports-and-scholarships/passport

Washington State Opportunity Scholarship. Scholarship for low and middle-income students pursuing their first bachelor's degree in a science, engineering, technology, or mathematics (STEM), or health care field at a participating Washington State institution.

Eligibility:
Washington resident high school senior, college freshman or sophomore
Cumulative G.P.A. of at least 2.75
Planning to enroll or enrolled fulltime in first time STEM or health care bachelor's degree
File FAFSA
Apply for federal education tax credits if eligible
Meet family income requirements
What Grant Can Cover:
Students can receive up to $7,500 per year based on total number of credit completion through their 5 year of college
Pros:
Money provided for tuition
Cons:
Grant only applied to STEM and health care bachelor's degrees
http://www.waopportunityscholarship.org/scholarship/overview

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Appendix I

Research Report: Arlington College Student Services and Academic Program Audit

Executive Summary

Cold Spring SD College Student Services and Academic Program Audit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DB, Ed.D.
SMM, MA-ATR
JW, MPA

In 2014, the Cold Spring Foundation partnered with the Cold Spring School District to implement a K-12 career and college readiness initiative. As part of the initiative, the district set a goal for 60% of its graduates to receive a meaningful post-secondary degree or certificate. For comparison, the baseline was 38% of Cold Spring High School graduates (Class of 2009) received a degree within 6 years of high school graduation.[11] During the 2016-17 school year, in addition to several significant K-12 efforts, the Cold Spring School District reached out to Arlington College to partner in the work, extending the K-12 model to a K-16 model.

In fall 2016, researchers interviewed district and school leaders in Cold Spring, as well as leadership, support, and instructional staff at Arlington College, to gather qualitative data on the current understanding and practices related to college and career readiness. Quantitative data from the district was also collected and analyzed. Additionally, researchers conducted a thorough literature review of key topics, including college readiness, national best practices related to career and college success, and models of student supports implemented across the country. Recommendations were made based on findings from the data collection and empirical findings.

Empirical Evidence. College readiness gained momentum and popularity just over a decade ago. Comprised of college awareness, college eligibility, and college preparation, college readiness has become more aligned with "workplace readiness" (Achieve, 2013) as experts in both the education and business fields have continued to collect data on students over time, tracking not just high school graduation, but entrance into college, persistence to meaningful certification or degree attainment, and subsequent entrance into the job market.

The literature recommends that college awareness activities begin no later than middle school (Wimberly and North, 2005; Tierney, Colyar, and Corwin, 2003; Martinez and Klopott, 2005). One of the primary goals during this time is to instill beliefs and expectations regarding the advantages of attending college and being workforce ready in addition to providing information about college access. Schools play an integral role in helping students develop college awareness by offering college awareness activities throughout the system (K-12). However, schools need to start by examining their own beliefs and expectations for all students.

College eligibility refers to completing the necessary courses required for college admissions. Unfortunately, earning a high school diploma does not necessarily ensure that a student has taken the necessary coursework for college eligibility. Students must enter high school with knowledge of the classes that are required for college admittance. Determining the extent to which a school is graduating students college-eligible is fundamental. In 2005, a study conducted for the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation showed that 70% of the students want to and plan to attend college; however, only 35% – 40% graduated eligible to do so. Most often, they were not eligible due to math and foreign language requirements.

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[11] The Initiative began in 2013. The goal is to have 60% or more of the class of 2024 receive a 4-year, 2-year, or career certificate within 6 years of graduating (2030).

A student who is prepared adequately for college will be able to enroll in college and succeed without remediation in credit-bearing courses at postsecondary institutions. In addition, a college prepared student would likely persist in college and/or would be ready for viable employment in the workplace. Schools must believe that college preparation involves more than making sure students take the minimal requirements for college admission. They must also require all students to take the appropriate college preparatory course sequences, and should "improve the rigor of high school coursework with a greater focus on in-depth content coverage and considerably greater secondary-to-postsecondary curriculum alignment" (ACT, 2005a).

In addition to career and college readiness, several local and national studies have focused on the economic impact of higher education. In a 2013 report from the Lumina Foundation, researchers wrote, "Perhaps the clearest evidence about the need to increase high education attainment comes from the fact that employers cannot find people with the skills they need to fill all of their current job openings, much less those that will be created in the future." (p.3). They continued, "The essential skills for success in today's economy are critical thinking skills-abstract reasoning, problem solving, communication, and teamwork. These are precisely the skills that are needed to build strong communities and societies wherever one lives." (p.4)

Locally, in a collaborative effort between the Washington Roundtable, the Boston Consulting Group, and the Partnership for Learning, community business leaders in the state have been collecting data to inform policy making and impact education, in an effort to strengthen our local economy and fill Washington jobs with Washington students. The Washington Roundtable set the goal of 70% of Washington students having a postsecondary credential by 2030. Currently, 31% of Washington students go on to earn postsecondary degrees. Urging a "cradle to career" approach, they suggested focusing on 4 areas:

Improve school readiness, with an emphasis on low income and traditionally underserved populations.
Improve our K-12 educational system to ensure career and college readiness
Increase the participation of Washington students in postsecondary education
Help students, beginning in elementary school, to develop better awareness of the careers that will be available

The idea of providing comprehensive services, and improving K-12 systems of education for all students throughout their life-span is well supported through empirical evidence, and qualitative data collected from similar initiatives across the country. As the economic need for more college ready students has increased over the last decade, so have programs designed to help students afford college. Many such programs are called "promise" programs, and include efforts to provide social, emotional, and fiscal support for students as they focus on the goal of career and college readiness. Results from over 80 Promise Programs across the state demonstrated positive results in varying degrees, with the most successful programs being the ones that consider a "whole child" approach,

including support services, mentor programs, and community participation embedded as critical components.

Cold Spring School District. Central to understanding the Cold Spring story is understanding the path they have taken over the last three years and where they hope to go next. In fall, 2013, stakeholders from multiple focus groups shared that one of the district's primary focus points was on college and career readiness. The district's strategic plan for 2008 to 2013 included providing opportunities for 9th through 12th grade students to develop a pre-graduation plan, providing opportunities for career information, career counseling, and school-to-work opportunities for students of all grade levels.

In 2016-17, the Cold Spring School District began its fourth year of developing a comprehensive career and college readiness support system (January 2013 – January 2017). They have had the same three goals driving the change for three years in a row. Since 2014, district leaders have been working with The DSA group and the Cold Spring Foundation to improve student outcomes and increase college going and persistence rates. To accomplish this, the district adopted 3 goals: Improve, Modernize, and Prepare.

IMPROVE - Improve student achievement by increasing the quality of instructional practice, classroom organization, professional development and teaching efficacy.
MODERNIZE - Modernize instructional practice, improve modeling for students of the power and leverage of technology, improve internal and external communications, and enhance overall district efficiency through the use of technology in everyday teaching and learning activities.
PREPARE - Students exit the Cold Spring School District genuinely prepared to succeed in college or a meaningful career by earning a diploma acknowledging their preparedness.
To work towards these goals, school leaders and stakeholders focused on several initiatives, including developing and implementing comprehensive career and college readiness committees, modernizing instructional practices, and hiring dedicated college advisors.

With evidence of clear progress in system outcomes, the Cold Spring School District continues to strive forward. Over the last several years, about 50% of all students who go to college go to Arlington College. KS, a foundation donor, shared, "Of the 50 percent that go to Arlington College, a large percentage of those kids drop out, slip through the cracks. There's a lot of reasons for that." To begin to develop a clear understanding of this data, a relationship between the school district and local college was formed.

Arlington College. DSA researchers visited the Arlington College campus in October 2016. Administration, instructional faculty, and support staff participated in focus groups and interviews, and provided valuable insight into the procedures in place to support students. Dr. Robert Mohrbacher, college president, shared, "This college is making history with its strong mix of associate and baccalaureate education, workforce training, transitional education, and our commitment to sustainable development in Washington."

Researchers collected qualitative data to develop an understanding of the level of student supports and academic programs currently offered at Arlington College. Additionally, school level stakeholders shared their perspectives on the meaning of "college ready" students, and on being a "student ready" college. Based on these qualitative experiences and thorough document review, researchers made several recommendations on how to continue advancing the work of becoming a K-16 career and college ready *community* forward.

Recommendations.

Annual survey and data collection, for Cold Spring School District and Arlington College
Greater efforts to collaborate with the community to create comprehensive awareness of becoming a career and college ready culture.
The creation of joint goals between Cold Spring School District and Arlington Community College
Expansion of student support services aligned with national best practices and empirical literature.
The development of comprehensive mentorship programs and Guided Pathways for students at the college level.
Implementation of college advisors as early as middle school.
Increased efforts to align instructional practices with an increasingly diverse population of students.

Appendix J

Cold Spring School District key performance indicators report

Cold Spring School District
2017
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Annual Report
Prepared by
The DSA Group, Inc.

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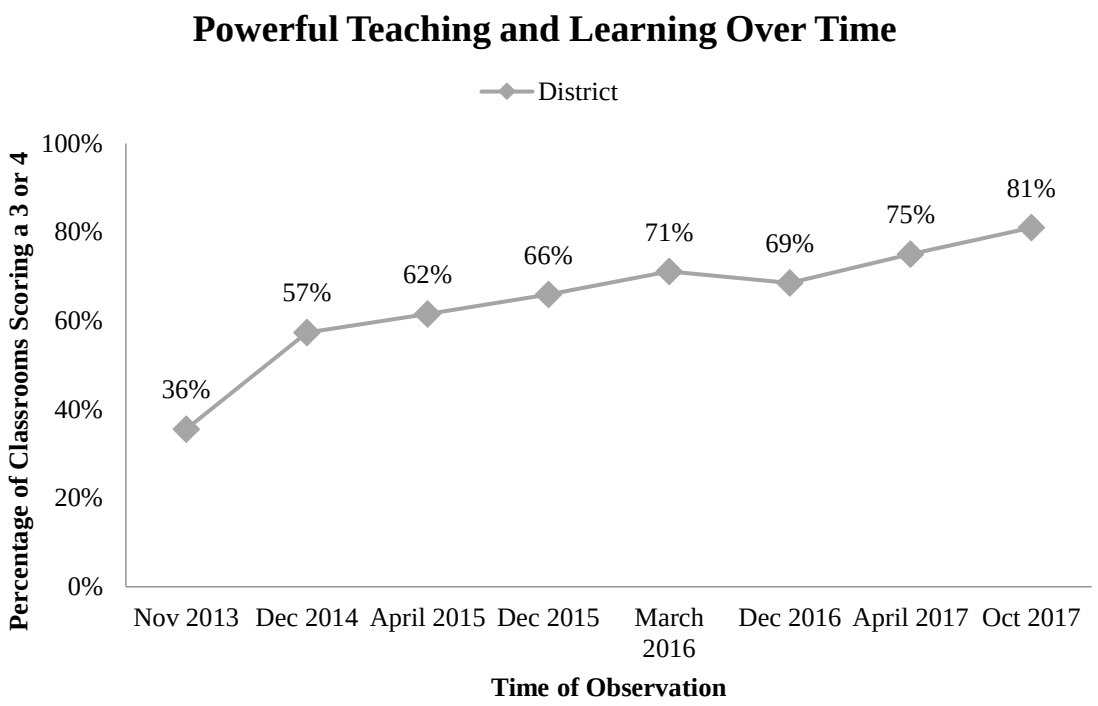
Figures



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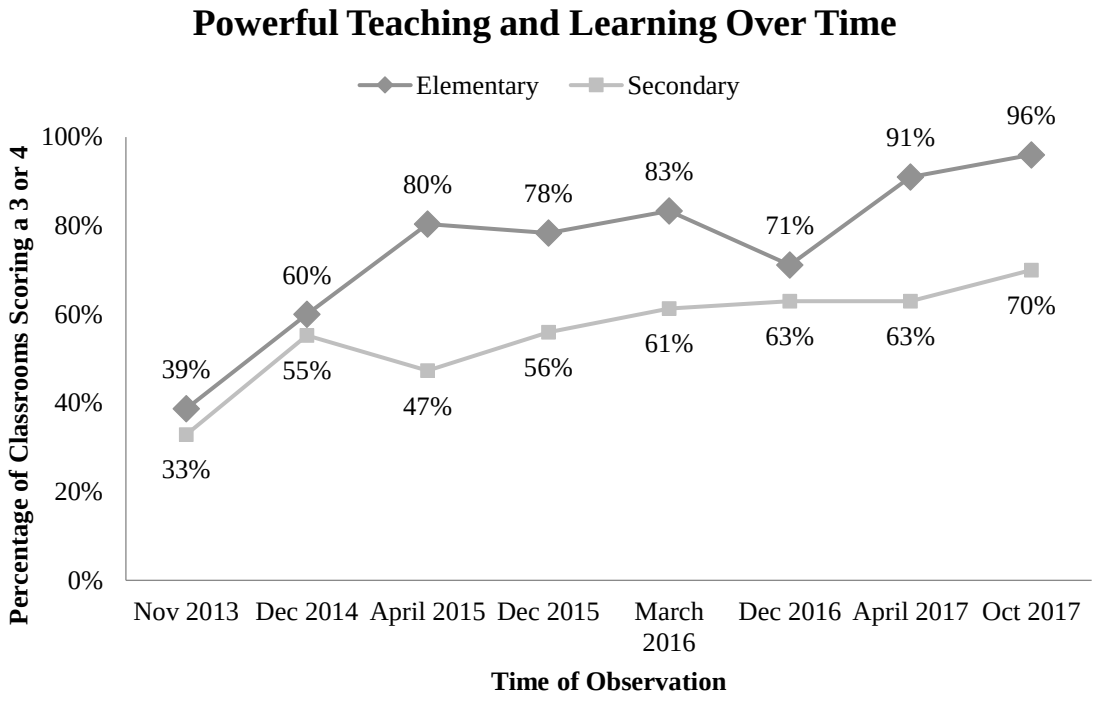

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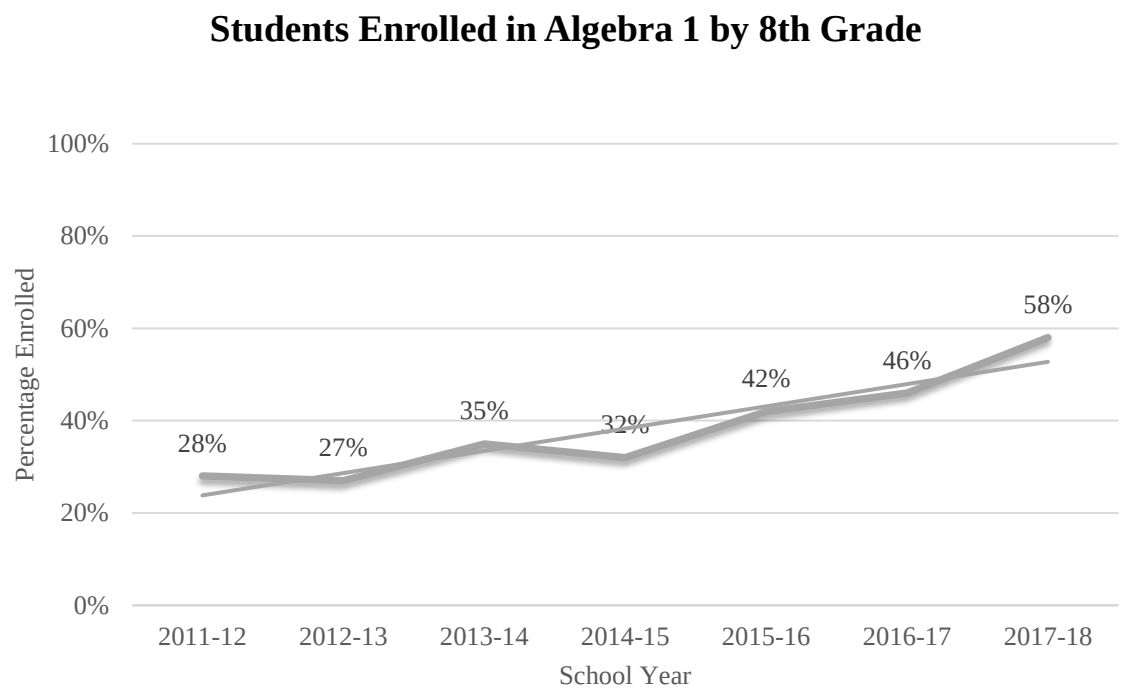

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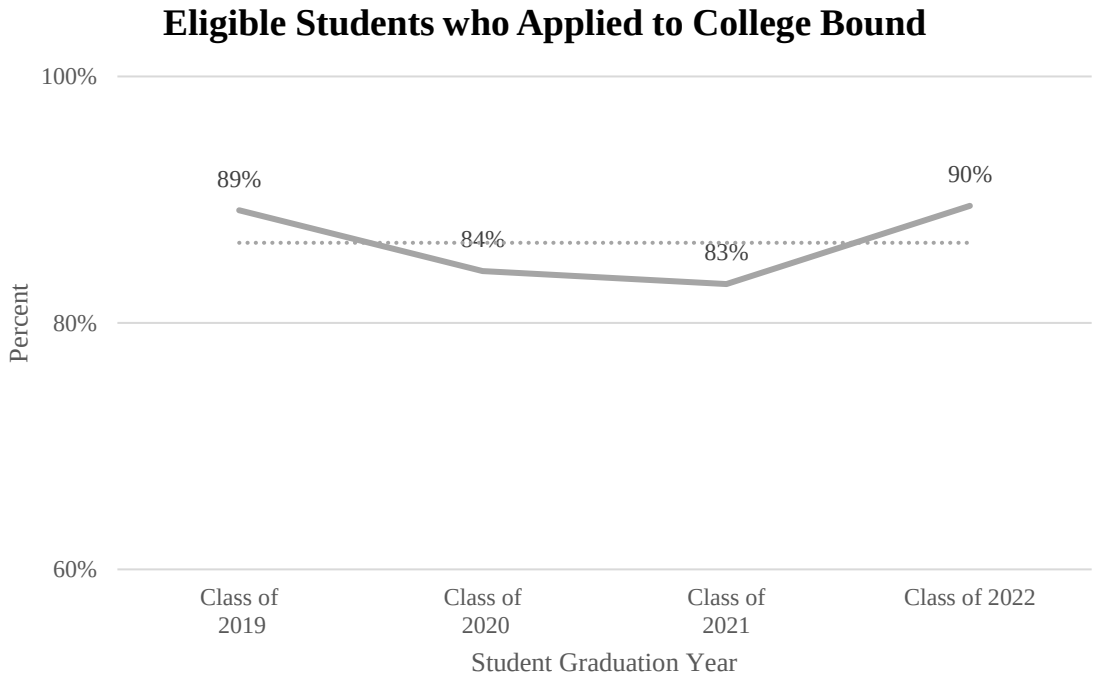

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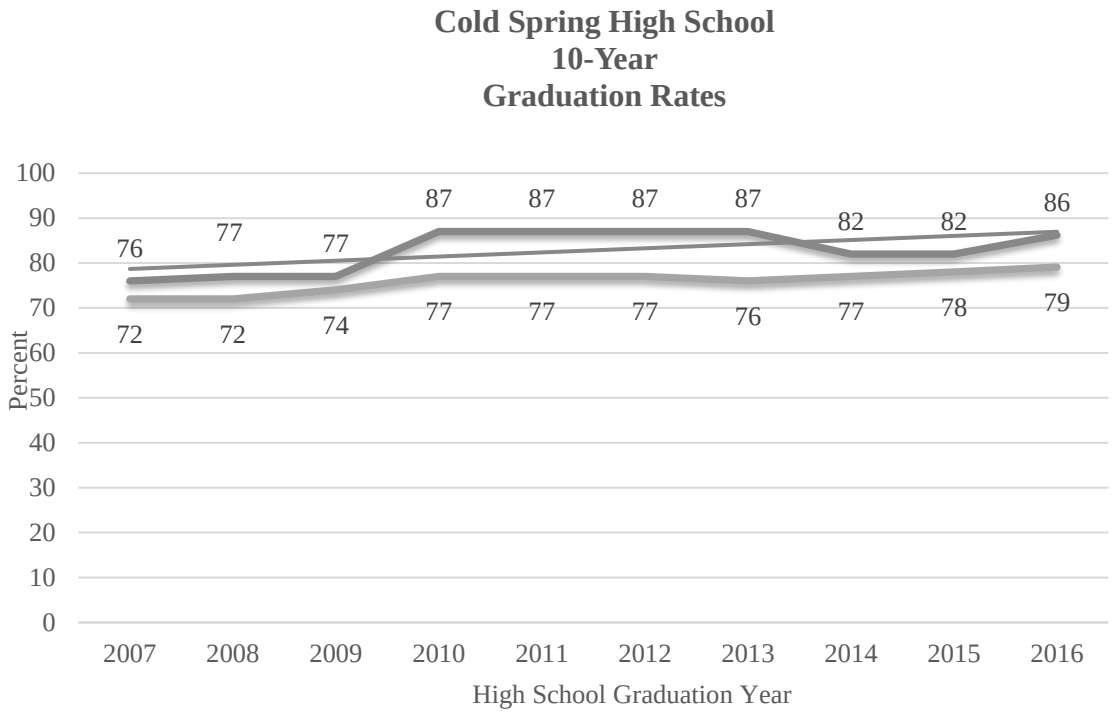

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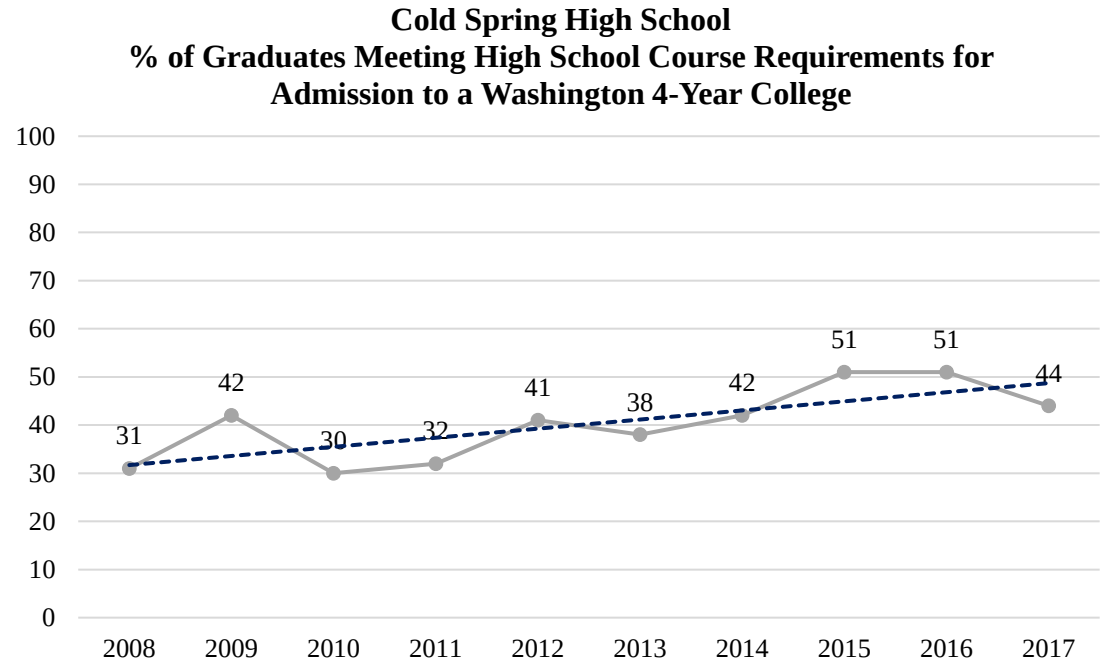

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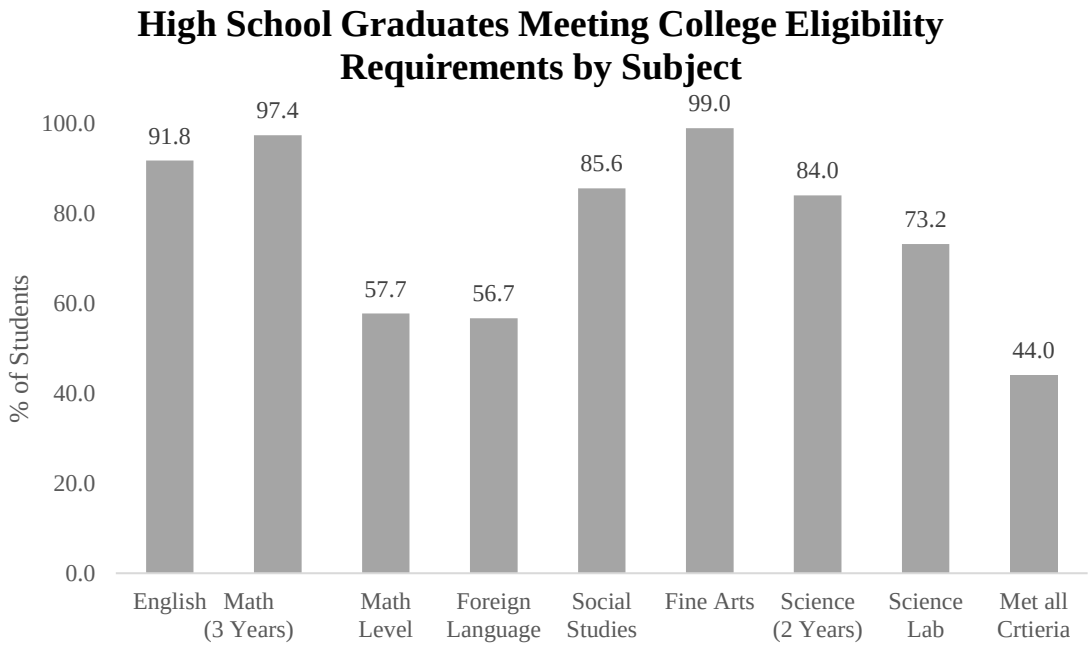

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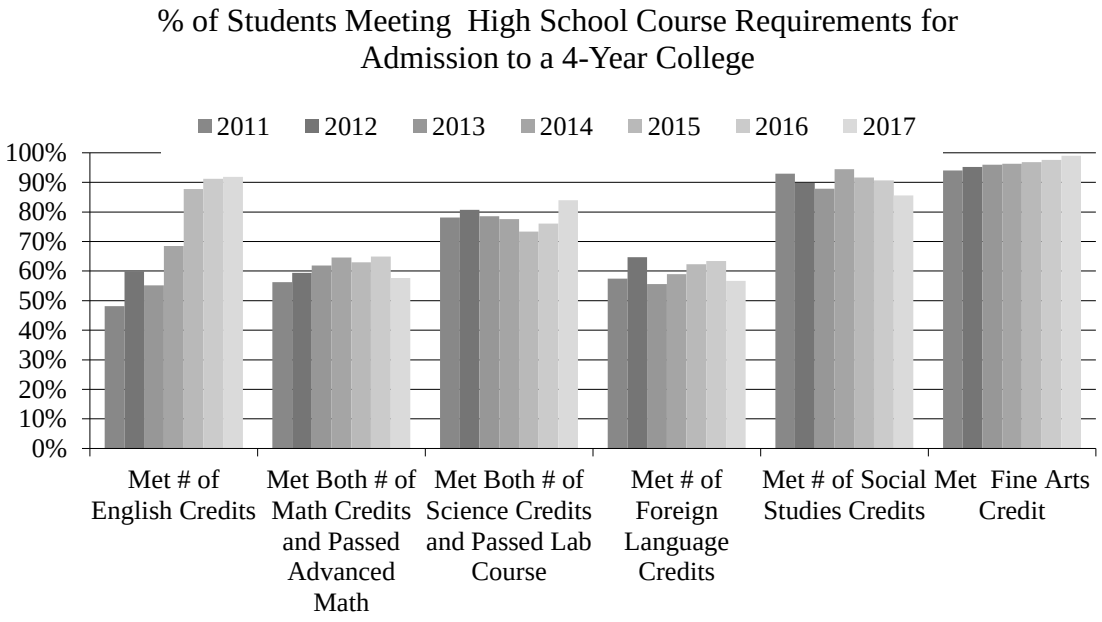

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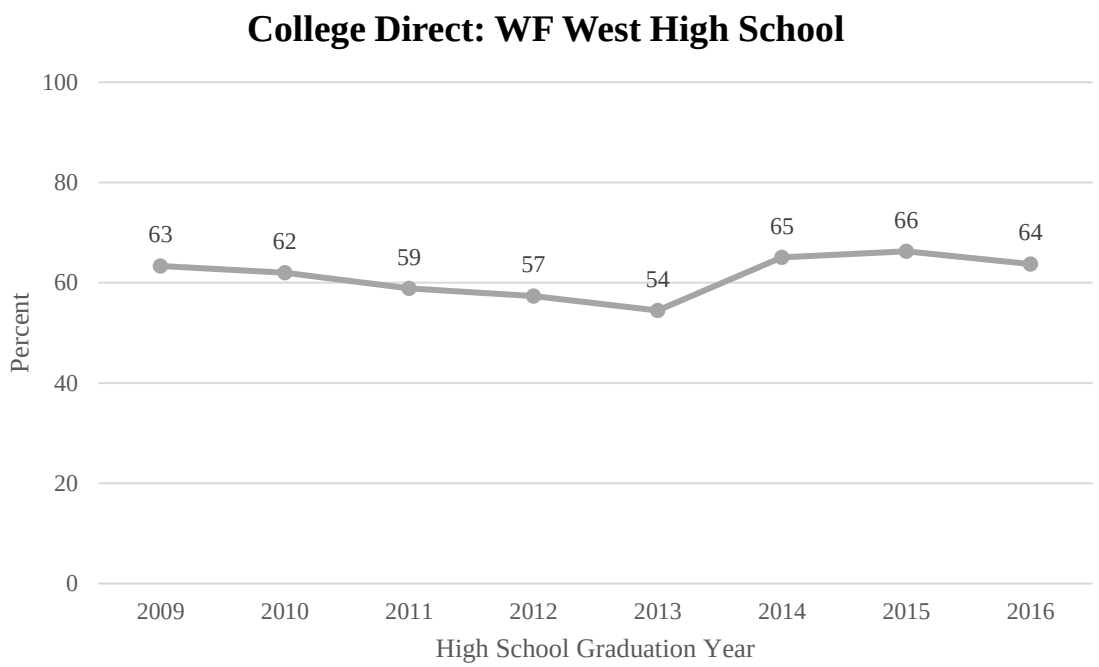

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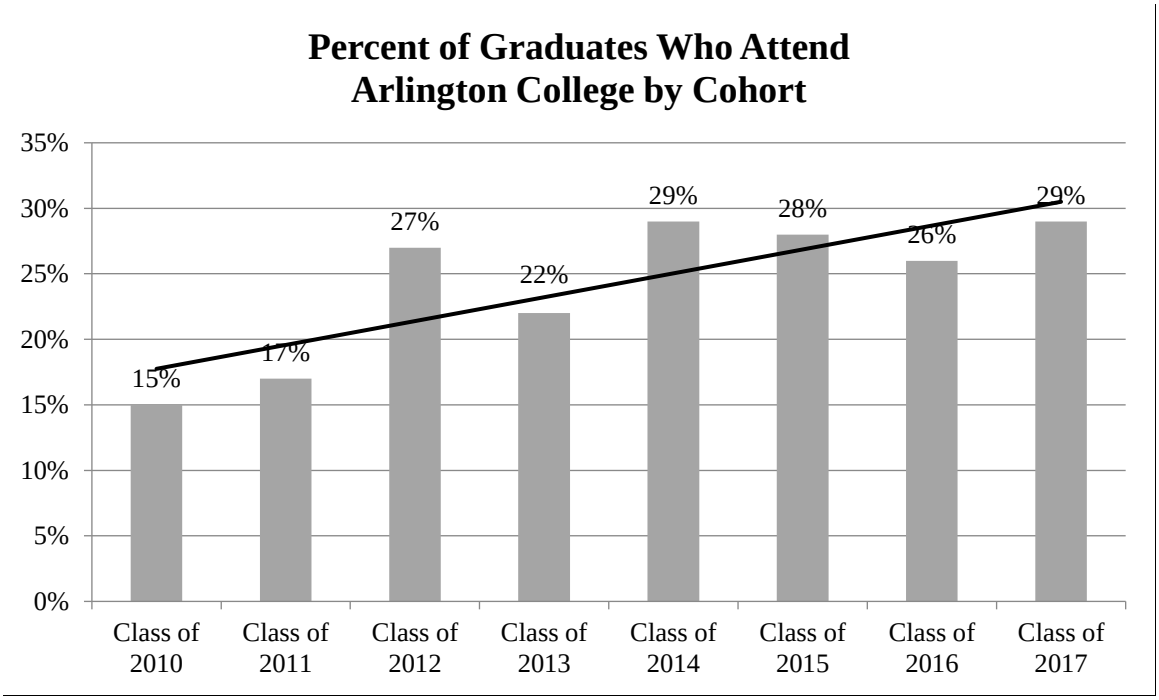

Figure 10

Appendix K

Career and College Readiness Committee goal setting document example.

Cold Spring Career and College Readiness Committee
Mission: The mission of the Career and College Readiness Committee is to develop and support a rigorous, comprehensive K-12 program focused on increasing Career and College awareness, preparation, and eligibility in partnership with the Cold Spring School District and community

Inputs	**Outputs**	**Inputs------Outputs**		
District and School Administrators District and School Staff Members Students Parents/ Guardians Community Members College and Career Personnel Businesses Parent Teacher Association	**Develop Career and College Awareness Across the Entire System** Focus instruction and language around college attendance and career readiness Create an environment where students see Career and College information on a daily basis Develop staff resources and support to provide Career and College awareness information Develop articulated Career and College awareness activities/programs Increase parent/guardian and community awareness about Career and College readiness Support transitions to the next grade Recognize and celebrate accomplishments to Career and College readiness **Ensure all students graduate Career Ready and College Eligible** Implement Common Core Curriculum that	**Changes in Student Course Taking Patterns** Increase pre-algebra enrollment in 7th grade by 50% All students take 4 English classes in high school **Increase the percentage of students signing up for College Bound Scholarship** Increase application rates to 80%	**Changes in Student Course Taking Patterns** Increase percentage of students taking algebra in the 8th grade and passing EOC exam. All students earn 4 credits in English **College Eligibility** Four-year college eligibility rates increase from 36% to 60% **Graduation Rates** High School graduation rates increase from 87% to 90%	**Changes in Student Course Taking Patterns** 80% of students meet standard on all standardized tests. **College Eligibility** Four-year college eligibility rates increase from 36% to 80% **Graduation Rates** High School graduation rates over 90% College graduation rates up

	supports Career and College readiness Provide information and support for the College Bound Scholarship Identify academically at-risk students to provide support for college eligibility Align course offerings to college entrance requirements Provide teachers opportunities to articulate curriculum and course offerings Provide parents/guardians and students with information about college eligibility requirements **Ensure all students graduate Career Ready and College Prepared** Implement Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Services to develop personal, social, and academic skills. Provide enrichment/advancement opportunities for students Provide support for the college application process Provide parents/guardians and students with information about college preparation requirements Prepare for college entrance exams			from 20% to 60%